

# LIFE AND LETTERS TO-DAY

OUT DEC. 1ST

## WINTER NUMBER

will be selected from

WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS

on

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VOL. 17 NO. 9

AUTUMN 1937

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## NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

HEINRICH MANN was to have spoken at the meeting on Spain and Culture on 24th June in the Royal Albert Hall. He did not come, and the speech was not given because he could not promise that it was 'opportune.' We are happy to be able to print it herewith. The author has recently added to his list of seventeen novels with *King Wren*, reviewed in this issue.

T. C. WORSLEY from January to April of this year was an ambulance driver in Spain.

VIOLET HUNT, an early contributor to *Life and Letters*, published her first novel in 1894. Of her twenty-one books, the most recent are an autobiography, *The Flurried Years* (1926), and *The Wife of Rossetti* (1932). We are privileged to print in this number an account which we consider brilliantly to capture the feelings with which air-raids were faced nearly a quarter of a century ago.

P. G. HARTLEY. Yorkshireman. Twenty-six years old. Major interests social problems and the ballet. On editorial staff of a financial newspaper.

CHARLES MADGE and HUMPHREY JENNINGS last contributed to the review with an article, *The Space of Former Heaven*, in our second number (Winter, 1935). Madge has recently published a well-received book of poems, *The Disappearing Castle* (Faber and Faber), which will be reviewed in our next issue.

PAUL SHUFFREY served for many years as a political officer in Sierra Leone, chiefly in the Sherbro Hinterland, which he at one time administered. He writes occasionally on sociology and architecture.

MELITTA SCHMIDEBERG contributed the first part of her study on group phenomena to the previous issue. An M.D. of Berlin, she has lived in England since 1930 and is a Physician of the Institute of Psycho-analysis, London.

KENNETH WESTON is collecting material for a book on the Troubadours intended for those who can appreciate the poetry and romance of their lives and songs, but are at present hindered by ignorance of the language.

SEÁN O'FAOLÁIN, born in 1900, has published six books, including biographies of De Valera and Constance Markievicz. His third novel, *Bird Alone*, was reviewed in our last winter number.

VLADIMIR MAYAKOVSKY is a Soviet poet, of whose position in the U.S.S.R. Lev Kassil's article is explanatory. Lenin, in the course of a speech at a conference of metal-workers, said of this poem, "not



for a long time have I experienced such satisfaction from both the political and administrative point of view as when I read Mayakovsky's poem, *In Re Conferences*. In this he completely ridicules conferences and mocks communists that they are always conferring in conferences. I don't know about its poetry, but about its politics I can vouch that this is absolutely correct."

PARKER TYLER in 1934 edited an anthology of modern poetry called *Modern Things* (Galleon Press, New York), and last year published a pamphlet, *Three Examples of Love Poetry*.

KEIDRYCH RHYS, who has been F.O./R.A.F., farms in Carmarthen. He says, "I don't want to go anywhere where I can't hear Welsh," and writes in that language, dialect, and English. He is twenty, has paid for two unpublished novels, is putting out both a book of poems and translations from Welsh poets, and is editor of *Wales*, a shilling quarterly whose contributors include Glyn Jones, Aneurin Ap Gwynn, Ken Etheridge, Margiad Evans, James Hanley, Glyn Roberts, etc.

LOUIS GUILLOUX published his first book, *La Maison du Peuple*, in 1927. Since then he has published four novels (*Dossier Confidentiel*, *Hyménée*, *Angelina* and *Le Sang Noir*), and two collections of stories and essays (*Compagnons* and *Histoires de Brigands*). The translation of *Le Paradis* began in our previous number. We hope shortly to publish something by Guilloux written directly in English.

HALLDÓR STEFÁNSSON is a contemporary Icelandic author, described in these pages by Kristinn Andrésson as "the brilliant writer of short stories". His published works include *Í Fáum Dráttum* (Berlin, 1930) and *Dauðinn á Þriðju Hæð, og Fleiri Sögur* (Bókaútgáfan Heimskringla, Reykjavík).

HSIAO HUNG, described by Lu Hsun, just before his death in 1936, as "the most promising of our women-writers", says of herself: "I was born in 1911 in the family of a small landlord in a small village in the extreme north-east of China. My father was a man of greed, wanting in humanity. He treated his servants, his daughter, or even my grandfather, with the same avarice and indifference. When I was nine years old my mother died and my father changed to become even worse. So I was always with my grandfather on the snowy evenings, listening to him reading poetry. Grandfather would put his wrinkled hands on my shoulders or on my head and whisper in my ear, 'Grow up fast! It will be good when you have grown up.' In the year that I was twenty I escaped from my father's family and since then I have been living the life of a wanderer. I have 'grown up' now but still it is not 'good'. Yet because of my grandfather who was

not cruel I know that besides coldness and hatred there is also warmth and love in life."

The translators add: "Hsiao Hung was formerly Miss Chang Nai-ying. She married a wealthy college student one year before the Mukden incident (18th September, 1931), and got divorced the following year. After her divorce, she led a romantic life for a while in the cosmopolitan city of Harbin (Manchuria), abandoning herself utterly to revelry and disillusionment. Compelled by poverty, she took to writing about her misadventures. Her first writings were published under the pen-name of Ts'iao Yin in the *Kuo-tsi Hsieh-pao*, a pro-Chinese paper in Harbin. She wrote of things no other Chinese woman-writer had had the daring to touch on, which led to her acquaintance with Liu San-Lang, now the famous Chinese writer T'ien Chun, who was then also a homeless young author. They became husband and wife. They collaborated in writing *Tramping*, a novel of their romance. They were arrested by the Japanese and their only benefactor, Old Fei, was confined in gaol for three months for helping them to escape. After their escape from Manchuria, they went first to Shantung and then to Shanghai, where they met the late Lu Hsun, who gave them much encouragement in their writing. Hsiao Hung then wrote *The Field of Life and Death*, which, like T'ien Chun's novel, *Village in August*, has a Manchurian setting and deals with the struggle of the Chinese masses against the Japanese invaders. Two novels, *Bridge* and *Business Streets*, will soon be published under their joint authorship.

NORAH HOULT is shortly publishing a new book, *Coming from the Fair*, which is a continuation of her last novel, *Holy Ireland*. She says of it, "I have tried to give a picture of pre-War Dublin before the political troubles and the Irish Free State came into being." We last printed a story by her in No. 2 (*Miss Manning's Fight*).

ELIZABETH BISHOP has contributed to such American reviews as *Direction* and *The Magazine*, and to the anthology, *Trial Balances*. She has been represented in LIFE AND LETTERS TO-DAY with a poem, *The Man-Moth* (No. 3), and *The Baptism*, which was her first story (No. 7). We are glad that we can follow *The Hanging of the Mouse* with more of her work in the next number.

RANDALL SWINGLER says: "I think really the only relevant things about me are the book of poems, *Difficult Morning* (Methuen, 1934), and the novel, *No Escape* (Chatto and Windus, 1937). You can say I was once a schoolmaster if you like."

MANFRED GEORG lives in Prague, where he edits the *Jüdische Revue*, and contributed an article on "War-Cinemas in Spain" to *World Film News* for April, 1937.

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NO. 9

## EDITORIAL

TWO YEARS AGO, when this review came under its present editorship, I was cynical about its chances. To-day, I have less of that *malaise* called modesty: *Life and Letters To-Day* has cured me of defeatism. I think it is not too much to say that we have been able to assemble in our pages an International Brigade of writers from all parts of the world that are civilized—and the recruiting is going well. Two years ago I may have thought that there would not be for long sufficient of the work we wanted to publish. To-day, my embarrassment is that, with only four numbers a year, we cannot publish all we would like.

It is a fault on the right side, and we enter on our third year with confidence. But I do not want to call apparently for congratulation. To find cause for congratulation in ourselves is to withdraw from the world, for there is little in the world to-day for which we can congratulate ourselves. We live in an age of which we are ashamed. We did not make it, but it is essential that the age we do make shall be one with more respect for what constitutes manhood, with more liberty and with better means of making a living. Then, when these are achieved, we may make more loveliness.

Towards the attainment of that, it is essential there should be some corner, some publication, in which there may be found not only freedom but honesty, of thought. Yet though it is our duty to hand on as much as we can of whatever culture we have been able to create, that is not enough. The torch must be handed on. We must see also that it is used for light and not for burning.

By that I mean, it lies with us to create the mood of the future. *Life and Letters To-Day* sets out to do more than save, more than to be a hospital or a museum. In withstanding tidal barbarism, one is doing more than saving. Naturally, it is well to remove what is valuable from the clutches of barbarians. But though that may lessen our loss, it will not in itself rob them of victory. More important than saving is to make—to make something that will defeat barbarism. It cannot be defeated if culture is forgotten, and even while we fight for culture, it is easy to forget its value and of what it is composed. To let it be a battle-cry of the emotions, instead of a guiding belief for the intellect. It is easy, indeed, to let culture become a memory, instead of the mould, of life.

As I see it, we are not so much concerned with saving to-day's culture as with trying to ensure that there will be one to-morrow. There will be none if people are allowed to forget. They must have something to build on, when it comes to the time for building. They must have the clarity which will let them remember that monsters have roamed the earth before now, and have died out because of their failure to adapt themselves to new conditions. Our present prehistoric survivals are dictators, uncharitable clergy, reactionary statesmen. They may seem inevitable. That does not mean they are necessary. They are inevitable only because of present conditions. Now that these are breaking up, we must see to it that the new do not allow of a repetition of creatures whose death-throes can so shake the world.

In the building of the new conditions, it may not be our lot to take part. Inheritors of an era of transition, we may ourselves be broken by the very conditions we attempt to make. But we can show the way, we can insist that there is a way, and do our best to keep it open. We can make it possible for those who come after to construct the only world which we dare any longer call real.

A torch is made up of many flames, and one of those flames of the torch of culture is, we hope, *Life and Letters To-Day*, to which so many who need no help from us lend their tongues of fire. No doubt I exaggerate its claims. But I seek only to make clear that it is neither solely as a sanctuary for what is past nor as a platform for the present, but as a fire for the forging of a better future than yesterday's that this journal tries to recommend itself to all who care to use it.

Meanwhile we shall continue to point out those aspects of each issue to which we think attention should be drawn. When we first expanded this journal to its present directory-dimensions we were criticised for our "variety", with implications that it was both accidental and unprofitable. The word has now been replaced, we notice, by "catholicity" and instead of being patronised for finding and printing work we liked, we are now applauded for our "fairmindedness". It has taken two years for that change to come about, and we don't want any further mistakes to be made. Therefore, childish as it may seem, we state that Heinrich Mann's speech will draw attention to itself. It is followed by deliberate contrast of war-observers in 1914 and to-day. Then we place, side by side, mass-observation and professional psycho-analysis with studies of African civilisation and medieval cannibalism as natural props. The African article, a study of youth-training, also contrasts with the account of an English unemployment camp, whilst the essay on the Knight of the Eaten Heart, showing how poems were made in the thirteenth century, prepares the way for the account of an evening with Mayakovsky, making poems in his own way to-day. This in turn is prefaced by a study of a Russian writer of the previous century. The literary articles,

therefore, seem to us to lead on from the sociological and psychological and at the same time to dovetail into each other. It may also be observed that the poetry leads on from Mayakovsky and ends with a dialect poem, placed before the section of translations. There is no particular point in saying this, except that it makes it needless further to answer Lord Gorell's redundant request, in the August *Cornhill*, that the editor of *Life and Letters To-day* should decide whether some of our contributions are "anything but a competition in lunacy". We are aware of no competition, and find it typical of the elder English reviews that they should be less willing to signalise sanity than what they so belatedly and laboriously find irrational.

## NEWS REEL

HEY-DAYS, WHATEVER THEY may not be, are at any rate something about which few people will agree. But to us the hey-day of the Alhambra will always be the nights when we went to hear the *Bing Boys*, wondering if we would also hear the Take Cover signal. On the site of that lamented (and once lamentable) house, a circuit is now raising the newest Odeon, making five cinemas in Leicester Square. It is announced that all Odeon cinemas are to have splinter-proof bomb-shelters. Shades of the *Bing Boys*! If it is asked why the entire cinemas are not to be bomb-proof, the answer is that the Government wish only shelters to be provided. It is their wish that, in the event of air raids, "the population shall be scattered as widely as possible." We cannot help feeling that that will also be the desire of other Governments—in the event of an air raid—and we must admit that this is not the first time we have suspected our own authorities of playing into the hands of others.

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### FLOWERS, BY REQUEST

Meanwhile, the riverside borough in which we live has announced, in its statement of rate services, that £1,527 was spent on the decorations, etc., for the Coronation whilst £500 is allotted to Air Raid Precautions. The point which chiefly delights us about this is that the cost of normal removal of house refuse is sixteen times as high. If we count more as decaying matter than as organic, the local slogan might well be "Keep Fit—For Manure".

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### DE LAWD

In another borough, high above Grenville Mews, W.C. 1, our eye was caught by a poster which read, "Resolution toward the honour of | The Lord Jehovah | —where the word | LORD | is used for a person it shall be spelled | LERD ". It appears to be a suggestion, nothing more. And it is only a suggestion on our part that the trouble is that by clergy the word "Lerd" has often been thus pronounced.

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### ELIZABETHAN TIN MINES

Recent mining disasters, revealing something of the conditions under which coal is obtained, make apposite an account of the methods by which Elizabethans worked. We have come on the following from a contemporary source. The mining is tin, and not coal, but the matter sounds familiar. "The workmen are let down in a Stirrup and then

passee forward underground, as farre as the ayre will yeeld them breathing, which, as it beginneth to faile, they sinke a Shafte, to admit a renewing vent, which notwithstanding their work is mostly done by Candle-light. . . . The loose Earth is propped by frames of Timber worke, as they go, and yet now and then falling downe, either presseth the poore workmen to death, or stoppeth them from returning. . . . While they thus play the Moldwarps, unsavourie Damps doe here and there distemper their heads, though not with so much daunger in the consequence as annoyance for the present." The writer refers to the "danger of skalding their bodies, burning their houses, tanned with smoake and besmeared with sweat". It reads like evidence in the Gresford inquiry, but our Elizabethan comment is "I know not whether you would more marvaile whether a sufficient gaine should arise to countermile so manifold expences or that any gaine should traine men to undertake such paines and perill. But there let us leave them, since their owne will doth bring them thither". The "gaine" these Cornish tin-miners got was "By the day, about eightpence, or for the yeere betweene foure and sixe pound, as their deserving can drive the bargain; at both which rates they must find themselves". The owners did better, then as now. One profit arose from the fact that when the tin was melting in the blowing house, "Divers light sparkles" were driven up to the thatched roof. "For which cause the owners doe once in seven or eight yeeres burn those houses," for the tin to be retrieved from the Ashes, which is "as much as payeth for the new building, with a gainefull overplus", amounting to ten pounds a year.

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## SPARROW MOUTH AND CAT BLINK EYES

We are grateful for a copy, sent us by a contributor, of the proceedings of Ye Ugly Face Clubb, of Leverpoole, for the years 1743-53. Viewed from this distance, the members make engaging acquaintance. Here, for instance, is a gentleman returning "heartly thanks for being Chosen *President* of ye most Ancient, Numerous and Honourable Fraternity of Ugly-Faces; to w<sup>ch</sup> have belonged the greatest Heroes, Statesmen, Poets, Saints and Philosophers; as Homer, Alexander, Aessop, Socrates, St. Paul, Cromwell, etc., who were all as eminently remarkable for their ugly Grotesk Phizzes as for their several Great Abilities and Extensive Knowledge".

Charming are the qualifications for membership, as exemplified by some of those who passed. "Jn. Tarleton—Very Thin Lips, Wide Mouth, No Upper Teeth, An Odd Effeminate Way and Grin. Smock Fac'd." This last seems to have been a help, for Richard Hughes is reported as being "A Fine Smock Fac'd Member". John Henderson, had a "Large Oblong Visage, Blink Cat Eyes, one bigger than the other,



and Thickish Lips ", and this apparently gave him " upon the whole a downright Ruff out of ye way Highlander's Face ". Teeth play their part—Matthew Strong rejoiced (though that seems scarcely the word) in an " Irregular Bad Set of Teeth like those of an old worn-out Comb thoroughly begrim'd ", whilst those of Augustin Woodward are classed as " Harrow ". We appreciate the phrase which records Thos. Wycliffe (22nd January, 1753)—" on the whole Picture of a Hard Winter " and appreciate the detail which says that Thomas Widdow's long chin " resembles the Picture of Cp' Flash in the *London Magazine* for April, 1747 ". The Army is well represented. Captain David Maitland (of the Hon. Major-General Irwin's Regiment), has a " rugged Phizz " which " belongs to Pharoah's lean Kine ", and Capt. Blackstock (January, 1756), has a " true mosaic face ". References to royalty are pleasing. A Cap' in Col' Graham's Regmt of Foot " greatly resembles King William ye Third's Head on a Half Crown ", and John Kenyon, M.D., " Cock. On the whole very much like the Picture of King Charles II in a huge Full Bottom'd Wig." But our favourite, for local reasons, is " Mr. Jno. Wood, 22nd July, 1751 . . . face altogether resembling a badger and finer tho' smaller than Sir Chris Wren's or Inego [*sic*] Jones's." As Mr. Jones designed St. Paul's, Covent Garden, back of our offices, we are further happy to know (what we always suspected), that there is such a thing as " a Covent Garden complexion ". It belonged, in 1752, to Arthur Hamilton.

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## COMPTES RENDUS CRITIQUES

French literary reviews have always shown more awareness than our own of what was being done in other countries, and translations loom largely in recent issues to hand of several reviews from France. *Mesures*, now in its third year, has already enthralled us with some translations from Tibetan. In its spring number, there were " deux hymnes magiques " from the Greek, and translations from the Provençal. A. M. Pettijean has put portions of *The Dog Beneath the Skin* into French with every appearance of ease (though the parts chosen did not include the choruses), and Jean Prévost translates three poems of Brecht . . . *Europe* (No. 172), has a translation of such sections deemed suitable from *Aller-Retour New York*, by Henry Miller, author of *Black Spring*. In addition, A. Cornu writes " un essai de critique Marxiste à propos d'un livre récent " on Rilke, and there are contributions by Jean-Richard Bloch and Jean Cassou . . . *Etudes Anglaises* is a new review edited by Professors C. Cestre and A. Digeon. It is given over, as its title suggests, to English and American literature, of the type that can include Charles Morgan and Edmund Blunden (a portion of whose verses on the Duke of Windsor are quoted). . . .

## TURNER'S BIRTHPLACE

At No. 26 Maiden Lane, where we have our offices, the painter Turner was born. His father kept a barber's shop at this address. There is no plaque on the building to record the fact. We ourselves owe the information to Dent's *Encyclopaedia of London*, edited by William Kent. This volume, of over half a million words, also reminds us that almost opposite, at No. 21, were the Cider Cellars, held to be the earliest music-hall. There have been other encyclopaedias, but this popularly-priced volume (it contains 784 pages for 7s. 6d.) has several new features, including essays on the boroughs, brief topographical biographies of famous citizens and generalised articles on such subjects as Water Supply, Clubs, Highwaymen, Passenger Transport. Abbreviations at first make for strange reading. Under "Adelaide House" we found

"On the roof are some fragments of stone-work from old L. B. and a miniature golf course."

"L.B.," it will be clear to the initiated, is London Bridge. It seemed not quite meeting the case to say that "London architecture has its most important centres at the Mansion House, St. Paul's Cath. in the City, the Imperial Institute and Museums at Kensington and Trafalgar Square, the Houses of Parliament and Buckingham Palace in Westminster", and it struck us as a pity that under Theatres, no architects were given, and that plays which ran well were thought more worthy of record than plays of quality. As for the Embassy and Everyman, only their dates of opening were given, nothing being said of the work they do or position they occupy. But in a work of this scope there are bound to be portions with which we disagree, and it would be unbalanced not to record our pleasure at reading of His Majesty's theatre that "the acoustic properties were found to be defective and in 1708 it became an opera house." Nearly all the obvious "lore" that one would expect is here, and we are particularly glad to remind our readers that there is a museum of lamp-posts at Tower Hill, that Princess Pocahontas, in 1616, was the first American visitor to London, that Aldwych was the district given to the Danes by Alfred and that among the objects in the pedestal of Cleopatra's Needle are Bradshaw's Railway Guide, a box of hairpins, photographs of a dozen pretty Englishwomen (period 1879), wire ropes, and a case of cigars. We shall never know why. Perhaps it is a comfort to think that neither will future ages.

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## CORRESPONDENCE

It is not our custom to print glowing tributes to ourselves. But it seems unfair that our correspondence should seem to consist only of

criticism. We therefore quote the following letter as typical of many we are happy enough to receive.

SIR,—MAY ANOTHER foundation-reader of your journal add his tribute of pleasure and appreciation? An exile, comparatively speaking, in an intellectual desert, I find it a quarterly balm and inspiration. Apropos your most original editorials, please continue the good work. I find that they reveal a personality that provides just that fine degree of pensive humanity designed to foster in the mind of an attentive reader the growth of sympathy. Can you give me the address of "Myers", whose fascinating catalogue you refer to? And (apologies to Miss Thompson ! !), do not fail to let me know when my subscription is due for renewal.

Most sincerely yours,

ERIC A. McDONALD.

P.O. Box 1298, Johannesburg, South Africa. 13th June, 1937.

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## WHAT NEXT

Writing these notes in August, it seems a little early to think of winter. However, we were put into the right frame of mind to do so by being served, on the hottest day of the year, with a typically English luncheon of tomato soup (hot), boiled beef and dumplings (not so hot), and a steaming golden pudding. Thus fortified against the chill and damp of a day when the thermometer stood at 84 in the shade, we felt like shaking the moth-balls out of our fur coat. But instead, we worked out the next number and are able to announce that it will include an essay on Tchelitchev by William Carlos Williams, a study of the work of Dorothy M. Richardson by Ellen Fitzgerald, and Watson Kirkconnell's promised survey of modern Polish poetry. William Empson will continue his researches into the history of word-usage with *The Phases of the English Dog*. Among the stories will be work by Osbert Sitwell, Kenneth Macpherson, Elizabeth Bishop. Louis Guilloux has promised to write memories of life in England directly in English, and it is hoped to be able to include a play by Louis Aragon. As usual in the winter number, reviews, theatre, and film section will be expanded—and we dare say that as soon as this number is out, there will arrive a flood of quite different material which it will be too late to announce.

# SPAIN AND CULTURE

By HEINRICH MANN

*(A speech which was to have been given at a meeting in the Albert Hall,  
24th June, 1937.)*

PERMIT ME TO endeavour to address you in English. I hope that I shall make myself understood, but even if you only understand half of it, that will be better than having a translation where the same thing has to be heard twice over.

Even one whose heart has never been open to generous sympathies, even one who has never felt or suffered for a good cause, could not help being moved by the terrible fate that has overtaken the noble Spanish people.

Recently General Franco informed the British Government that he could not guarantee the security of the operations for the evacuation of women and children from Bilbao. Such was the answer of the rebels to the British plan for the evacuation of refugees from Bilbao. From whom does the British Empire receive this insolent answer? From a mere brigand. There is something wrong here. This is an open threat to the security and content of civilization and humanity.

Whence comes this threat? In certain quarters it is alleged that the threat comes from Marxism, from the "Reds". But the answer I have quoted above comes not from a communist but from a leader of the rebels who has at his back two fascist powers. Everyone can see that these two fascist aggressors have not become more moderate with the passage of time but more violent and more malignant. Such cruel acts as the bombardment of Guernica and Almeria did not take place at the beginning of the war in Spain when the first leader of the military insurrection, General Sanjurjo, received his orders from Berlin.

However, not only General Sanjurjo, the first of the leaders guilty of the revolt, but also his most dangerous successor, General Mola, have been killed. Sanjurjo and Mola have both suffered the same fate. Whether their aeroplanes were accidentally wrecked or deliberately sabotaged, it is difficult not to see the judgment of fate in these two events, and history will pronounce its judgment also when the two powers who raise the claim of acting as the saviours of Western civilization as an excuse for their deeds, prove in practice that they are becoming more and more a danger for civilization.

The peoples of the three great democracies of the world, England, France, and the United States of America, are bringing their ancient experience and ability into play to an ever greater degree in order to

save the peace of the world. On the other hand, the two irresponsible adventurers who have in their hands the destiny of the peoples of Germany and Italy, make ever wilder havoc of peace, of the life and happiness of humanity.

Further, it is impossible not to recognize that Republican Spain has deprived its detractors of the last excuse for pretending that the fascist forces have taken the field against enemies of human order and decency. Nobody in the world can honestly believe such inventions. The Government of the Spanish Republic has recently been reconstructed, and reconstructed in a more conservative direction. This in the midst of revolution and war. Everyone can see for himself on which side there is good faith and on which side bad faith. There is no longer the slightest doubt about it. It may be that actions are still often taken that fly in the face of clear facts, as if doubt about the facts were still possible, but I think that we who are gathered here have the duty of paying homage to truth. Republican Spain has on its side not only formal justice and law, and the assent of its people. It represents inner righteousness, clear conscience, and true morality.

This is the political aspect, and what I have said here, I say as a member of the World Committee Against War and Fascism, whose president is a man whom I am honoured to call my friend, I refer to Professor Langevin, and which has among its eminent members the two Nobel prize-winners, Sir Norman Angell and Romain Rolland. But I would also like to say a few words to you as a man who has spent his life in studying his fellow men and who has learnt much from them.

When I think of Spain innumerable pictures pass before my mind, some of them terrible, others sublime. I see people who are suffering as few people have suffered. I see people inspired by enthusiasm and courage, and truly the history of the world has seldom seen their like. On the other hand, among the enemies of the Spanish people, I do not only observe presumption, hatred, and cruelty; I recognize that in the last resort their monstrous deeds are the result of desperation. Fate wills it that the enemy of the people and the scorner of humanity should become filled with the deepest disbelief in himself, and should go forward wading desperately through seas of blood before he finally collapses and goes under.

The photographs we see from Spain give us pictures of a reality of which we had previously never dreamt. However much we may have learned of human affairs in the past, we never anticipated that such things could occur. Everyone outside Germany and Italy has seen pictures of the children who have been killed. Aeroplanes chose precisely the time when they were coming out of school in order to hurl death at these little ones from the air. Among the airmen were Germans, for a period it was the Germans who formed the main force against the Spanish children. One sees these children with their heads

shattered by fragments of bombs ; in one an eye has been knocked out ; in another, part of the skull has been blown off. Most of them have their mouths still open ; they seem to be still speaking, to be asking " Is it true ? " and to be answering " What a pity for us—and for you ".

The Spanish Republic has published side by side a photograph of a school crowded with living children and one of the same school filled with corpses. Between the living and the dead there is an aerial bomb with a German inscription. The text to these photographs says : " This is a behaviour which betrays a depth of degeneration and stands in contrast to the Republican care for children. Since the beginning of the war the Republic has taken care of the children in schools and sanatoria."

The long series of pictures with which we are familiar not only portrays the destruction of Madrid in all its aspects, and the death of human beings in every form, it also depicts the origin and the course of the war. One sees the faces of the generals who began the war, and men who have betrayed their oath and who hate the people could not have more repulsive countenances. But one sees also the open countenances and proud bearing of the poor peasants. Their enthusiasm is expressed in the way in which men with rifles in their hands embrace one another, just as they have embraced the cause of freedom and victory. A young comrade, from his appearance maybe a German, is to be seen inculcating among a crowd of people, who follow him with eager and happy expressions, the new sense of duty, discipline and social conscience. Handsome Spanish girls are to be seen leaning seriously on their rifles.

It is high time that we should speak simply and clearly. Intellectuals, put aside all your doubts. Workers, be true to yourselves. Distinguish clearly between friend and foe, that is the chief thing, from that will come the certainty of victory and an invincible people. Thus Spain has had to learn what is indispensable for it to learn in order to live, in the midst of war and threatening death. It has had to learn the art of war in the midst of carrying on war, it has had to learn discipline when discipline became a matter of life or death. The Spanish people has succeeded in doing what can be achieved only by a nation acting in the most deadly earnest : it has been able to win people to itself. Propaganda that has a lasting effect is propaganda that arises from experience. Under the conditions in Germany to-day propaganda is a lie, a more-than-life-size lie. Republican Spain becomes known and is respected throughout the world because it embodies truth.

It proclaims freedom and acts accordingly. It proclaims humanity, and observes it in the face of the most cruel enemy. Soldiers desert from the fascist forces and come over to its side. On the Republican side there are no deserters. Among the enemy there are mutinies, and conspiracies increase in number. The shooting and execution of their

own people are events of daily occurrence, even during the course of battle itself. Thus, many dead have been found by the Republicans, after a victory, in places where their shots could not have reached.

Among the Republicans, prisoners are not put to death. Fortunate are those who fall into their hands. The workers and peasants in uniform from the other side re-find here their natural comrades, at last they encounter natural ideas which their taskmasters have never been able entirely to root out. Simple common sense once more asserts itself. They sing the hymn of liberation as if they had never been fascists. They join up in Republican battalions and forget all the madness for which they have so long been made tools of by their oppressors. The Italian soldiers have no longer any interest in the aim of a Roman Empire, the Germans become men of a different philosophy.

It is remarkable how quickly this takes place. This is one of the lessons we learn from Spain, a profound far-reaching lesson such as can be given only by the simplest truths. Here we have a people that stands firm ; it has become steeled, strong, and unconquerable in serving the cause of the people. But a people that honestly serves the cause of the people, serves also the cause of humanity, its thoughts are in accord with humanity, its deeds are done on behalf of humanity.

Spain has taught us that we are made nobler and better by fighting for freedom. It is no use making war on freedom. The fascist swindle can be kept up by non-military means for a time, perhaps even for a long time. But as soon as the autocratic rulers resort to military means it becomes obvious that they are poor devils who have stolen their authority from no one knows where, and no one believes in them any longer. The poor devil Franco is a terrible exposure for all his fellow dictators, and he would be so even if they did not share his defeats with him. It is true enough, the Italians have let themselves be defeated, German aeroplanes of the most modern design lose every fight, the German tanks go by the name of travelling coffins. But that is nothing ; the fact is that oppressors cannot have reliable soldiers. One fights for freedom with one's own will and mind ; the fight for freedom fosters self-reliance, for freedom is the most stubborn impulse of the human race. The conscript soldiers of despotism will always run away, regiments of them at a time ; they will desert to the other side if they can.

They only wait until the compulsion stops. The fascist mentality comes to an end, and it is precisely the battle that puts an end to compulsion. To desert is dangerous, but it is an act of will, the first after years of complete subordination. Basically, however, this subordination has no hold at all, otherwise all the drill and subjection, the impersonal automatism and miserable compliance would not fall away so suddenly from these forcibly enrolled men. It is the régime itself which against its will has prepared the way for them to desert *en masse*.



The defeat and disintegration of the fascist divisions in the foreign theatres of war is the inevitable outcome of their fascist training.

Spain is teaching us. It is bringing to the fore the true facts of the European situation. Secondly, it compels all of us to look back. The Spanish Republic knows to-day what it has failed to do. An obsolete state must first be rebuilt socially. Without social reconstruction every political change is not only inexpedient: it only provokes those who have the economic power in their hands and hastens the catastrophe. From this arises the most important and the most serious lesson from Spain: to set to work and labour for the future: not to wait until the question of "to be or not to be" has been decided. It is necessary to set an example, even while the bombing planes are still attacking and hearths and homes have to be saved. Financial reconstruction has begun. People do not think of war and of nothing but war and let everything else go. The land is now being divided among the peasants, machines are being constructed, and the workers' co-operative movement is being built up. Hardly has a town or village been freed from the deadly grip of the fascists, but the work is begun, not on the plane where it was broken off, but on a higher plane, socially and humanly. This does not fail to have its effect on the peoples of other lands, who find it impossible to remain inactive spectators when a people and a state are showing the bravest will to live.

It would be sublime enough to defend the ruins as the Spaniards are doing. But to build at the same time is better still. The cultivated area in the territory at present held by the Republic covers more than two million hectares. More has been sown in this war year than in time of peace. More will be reaped. Otherwise it would be difficult for assistance to be sent from without—the International Solidarity Fund alone has sent its twenty-sixth consignment of food. Otherwise foreign delegations would not be sent. The People's Front, the English Church and Parliamentary delegations, the socialists, liberals, and catholics were all astonished, when viewing the living Spain that anyone could believe that Spain was wrong in desiring to live according to its own will. On the contrary, this Spain teaches the other peoples to live according to their own will in spirit and truth. The former foreign minister, Del Vayo, has declared: "A people's movement emanating from the United States, has helped much in turning the tide of public opinion throughout the whole world in our favour."

The world and its peoples are, after all, not with those who would make them poor and stupid in order to misuse them for their own advantage. The heart of the world beats for a people which teaches such great lessons by word and deed, by suffering, struggle, and labour.

*(Written in English by the author)*



# PROPAGANDA AND SPAIN

By T. C. WORSLEY

IT IS PROBABLE that there has never been a more consciously pacifist decade than 1925-35, a period when, to our insularity, the issues still seemed to be remote enough to be academic. The final retreat from the League, which the National Government staged so blasphemously soon after Hoare's solemn promise of steady and collective resistance to any and every act of aggression, came with a suddenness, however unjustifiable, which left the Labour movement divided.

But history does not wait for movements to clarify their minds, and events after 1935 moved so fast that the division was never properly faced : with the result that each successive issue, from the rearmament policy to the Spanish war, has served only to emphasize the confusion and to produce inaction. The inaction is the result of the confusion, and, since the dilemma is real, the issue must be faced before it can be resolved. The division is between the genuine pacifism, in different degrees, of a large part of the Labour movement, and the growing aggressiveness of another part.

My own experiences in Spain made it easier to understand that division, since it took place in my own feelings. On the one hand, to see the courage and endurance of the Spanish people in their appalling sufferings, and to learn to love them as people, was to feel, if possible, more passionately devoted to their cause than ever. On the other hand, to experience something of the horrors of war itself had the effect of confirming my pacifism.

When, last February, I stood in a hospital behind the Morata front : and, while 'planes were dropping their bombs on the village nearby, upstairs, downstairs, in the passages and courtyards of the converted farmhouse the wounded were lying, with more arriving every moment : when I saw the doctors making hasty examinations to pick out the worst cases, deftly unwrapping the pulp of a shoulder or an eyeless forehead : when I noticed the purple jellified mess of a man shot in the genitals, and the lolling delirious mouth of a legless boy—I didn't need to remind myself that the justice of the cause makes no difference to the reality of war.

Nor does modern war discriminate ; the aged, the women, and the children are as much the enemy as the soldiers. I saw them trudging some hundred and fifty miles, for the first fifty of which they were shelled from the sea and bombed and machine-gunned from the air : old men of seventy, women with babies at the breast, children of seven or eight who had set out absolutely alone : for the most part without food or shoes, at the very limits of human endurance from exhaustion, hunger, and exposure, to arrive at their destination homeless, penniless,

and without being able to see any but the faintest hope for the future : enduring, in short, at one and the same time, a set of sufferings any one of which we commonly regard as unmitigated disaster.

War, moreover, inevitably corrupts ; the very qualities which take people into it are those which must be suppressed in order that it may be won. As the war is prolonged, disillusion is bound to spread, and, to counteract it, propaganda lies must become more wildly false and must whip up a spirit of intenser hate. And in proportion as one side is too squeamish to pursue these principles to the full, it will be the loser.

Such are the ordinary commonplaces of war, and only those who refuse to submit their imaginations to them can despise the absolute pacifist, or even the hesitation of those whose pacifism is less absolute.

The three books<sup>1</sup> under review raise these issues. They emphasize the physical horrors of modern warfare. *The Martyrdom of Madrid* is a collection of published and unpublished articles sent from Madrid by the late M. Louis Delaprée, and, although unnecessarily badly translated, it gives a vivid picture of the terror and tragedy in a city daily and nightly bombarded. It is a terrible story and, significantly, his paper refused to publish half the articles. People do not want to realize the truth.

Mr. Watson's account of his time in Spain, first as a volunteer and then as a journalist in Madrid, raises a different issue. It might have been dismissed as a hurried journalistic account, of no real value, but when allowances are made for certain obviously heightened passages, giving a not too inaccurate impression of what it was like to be in Spain last year. But instead of that the reviewer in the *Daily Worker*, I noticed, dismissed it contemptuously and violently on the grounds that no decent person will have any consideration for a person who "ratted" from the International Brigade and became a journalist.

If Mr. Watson's own account is at all accurate, the fact seems to be, that having gone out to a volunteer army in a rather romantic spirit, he found, after some weeks' fighting in desperate and ill-organized battles, that he could not stand it. He asked to resign from the Brigade ; his resignation was, apparently, accepted, and he became a journalist in Madrid (where he was subsequently wounded). It is noticeable that his friends in the Brigade whom as a journalist he subsequently visited in the trenches, showed none of the vitriolic resentment which the reviewer in the *Daily Worker* office was able to muster.

<sup>1</sup> *THE MARTYRDOM OF MADRID* : inedited [sic] witnesses by Louis Delaprée. Madrid.

*SINGLE TO SPAIN* : By Keith Scott Watson. Arthur Barker. 7s. 6d.

*VOLUNTEER IN SPAIN* : By John Sommerfield. Lawrence and Wishart. 2s. 6d.

To anyone with even the slightest experience of war the three attitudes of the "quitter", his ex-comrades, and the propagandists at home are as intelligible as they are revealing. Those who are actually fighting, especially the ordinary infantrymen, know too much about it to feel anything but envy for those who escape, whether they desert, or resign (where that is possible), or get appointed to the base, or seconded home for duties there. While those in command must use any and every method to keep those who are fighting at their posts; at the front they will, when necessary, use revolvers: at home, when necessary, lies. That is the ordinary condition of any war, and it seems that those who are prepared to embark on it, must be prepared to accept that condition.

The most tempting, because the most specious, of those lies is that "this war is *different*", a lie which has probably been used in every war that has yet been waged, but which is particularly potent for socialists in this particular case, when their sympathies and passions are naturally aroused. This is one of the falsities which I find in Sommerfield's book in spite of its stressing of the horrors. Although shorter and making a specific claim to impermanence, it is a much more serious book than Watson's. Sommerfield is a writer rather than a journalist, and his book is reportage rather than journalism. It contains some very effective writing, for instance in the section called "Natural History of the War", where, by listing the variety of kinds of Bullets, Aeroplanes, Shells, Wounds, Death, etc., he produces a really horrifying effect.

So long as the writer is generalizing other parts are equally effective. But as soon as he particularizes, as soon as he comes to deal with a scene involving horror, action, or violence, something happens.

"I began to feel fine, so did John. I must say it seemed against nature: it would have been more reasonable to have felt awful: the others did. When we told them how fine we felt they hated us. The lorry came, and there were buckets of hot coffee with brandy in it, plenty of it, and some biscuits.

" 'This is a fine war,' " said John.

" 'Sure,' I said, 'it's a fine war.' "

I noticed that it was a quite common thing in Spain for people to behave not as if they were themselves in the Spanish war, but as if they were characters from Hemingway's forthcoming (?) novel on the Spanish war; and since some evasion from the intensity of suffering is essential in war-time for the mere preservation of sanity, perhaps relapsing into the sentimental toughness of a Hemingway character is as good a way as any other. But to continue to fake your feelings (whether consciously, or unconsciously) once you are out of it seems to me no part of a writer's business.

And if you do, you reach a position something like this:—

"... I learned something about war that I would never forget—that its real vileness did not only lie in its physical horrors but also in what

it could do to men's minds. We were lucky, we could remember what we were fighting for and it was something real; but ordinary wars were for a lie, and either one found out, or forgot, and in either case it would be too late and one would be lost."

This point is put more explicitly later. When they had just come out of the line, dead to the world and soaking wet, the Thaelmann battalion going towards the line, marched past them singing: "There was a big red flag at the head of the column and each company had a red banner. It was a brave sight. It had all the glamour and excitement that governments can use to make men forsake their homes and die on foreign soil for foreign markets, but it was *ours* and the glamour was real. . . .

"It was good that there were moments like this to remind us why we were here and give point to what we were doing. . . . I think that in ordinary wars soldiers only stick around because they can't get away, because they are trapped—in their minds I mean—so that they can't think beyond what is happening to them at the moment. But this was a different war; it was possible for things to happen to make you remember why you were in it and then all the other things didn't matter."

The feelings which Sommerfield here describes are, of course, in no way *different*. They are exactly what in the first few months of any war any soldier might feel at the sight of his own flag. It is just what some of our fathers and uncles felt in 1914 when they were defending, as they thought, liberty, democracy, and right as against might.

To say that is not to belittle in any way those who are fighting in Spain. Far from that. It is simply to state the truth about war and the wideness of the gap between the real feelings of the actual combatants and the faked feelings of propaganda departments; a discrepancy which, as everyone knows, the combatants themselves usually resent. Whether it is the only way to conduct propaganda during a war, I don't know. Perhaps it is.

The Spanish war has, naturally, roused our passions; and enthusiasm for the cause forgets the reality, especially when speeches and articles obscure and minimize it, or, more dangerously, as readers of Glover's *War, Sadism and Pacifism* will understand, simply play on aggressive feelings. The old propaganda barrage of heroics, hate, and glory is set in motion again: at meetings we are urged to "Hate! Hate!" or even "Kill! Kill!"; in one breath we are urged to deplore the Air Display at Hendon, and in the next to exult in a similar display over the Red Square in Moscow; we are assured that violence is not only necessary, but that—provided that it is *ours*—it is not really so bad as we used to think.

Recently in London I saw the Soviet film *We from Kronstadt*, in which there are some horrifying, realistic battle-scenes—a line being mowed down by machine-guns and shots of hand-to-hand fighting and

killing. But even more horrifying than the film was the attitude of the audience, which laughed with quite evident pleasure and excitement at the most violent scenes—provided it was “*we*” who were killing.

Perhaps they are right; and we are entering an age of violence when squeamishness is contemptible and the reasonable thing to do is to train ourselves in blood-lust and to enjoy what we shall anyhow have to endure.

But it is worth recording that in Spain I saw a number of films which displayed the might of the Soviet army, and others which showed violent scenes of the war; but I never heard anything like that in the London cinema. The Spanish always received the films in silence; not because they were less militant than the English, but because they had a real and not a romantic appreciation of what the films were about.

## SHINGLE STREET, 1914

By VIOLET HUNT

THE DAY AFTER the bombing of the little Suffolk town of Woodbridge, when the Germans missed Fitzgerald's great rose tree from Naishapur, but hit the school-house and killed several little children in it (this was all in the paper that I was holding in my hand), I sat in a train on my way to those parts and read a poem on England in *The New Witness*, by Geoffrey Howard :—

“ And she is very small and green  
And full of little lanes all dense with flowers.”

And feeling like *that* about England and the Germans all the way along ; from the great serious main line train I was delivered on to the wayside platform and packed into a sumptuous Government car, so large that, the way being narrow, it brushed the hedges, laced with bindweed and studded with pink and purple flowers on both sides. The colours were all dulled into grey with the dust that many motors had raised up from the patient roadside to fling on them, but still lush and damp and sweet-smelling. Through hidden lane after hidden lane we drove, winding out at last on to a flat green common, when I got my first view that day of England's great sunk fence of water which divides her from the Continent. Blue, candid, like a baby's reflective eye, it lay, of a reassuring, halcyon calm than which nothing could be less disturbing or sinister. But across that pellucid ditch the trained eye of my host was casting low glances of attention spared from his driving. . . . He saw, peradventure, the tips of bayonets, the glint of helmets peering over that peace and harmlessness. Alert beside me in his smart blue uniform studded with bright buttons, he was studying revenge for Woodbridge. All he said to me was, “ There is sure to be a Stand-by to-morrow. You've come for that, haven't you ? ”

Glancing from the wavy stripes of gold braid, like eels in the water, that played upon his coat sleeves to the bronze determined face of this fashionable architect turned naval officer—I had just parted in London from the author turned subaltern—I asked him what he meant by “ a Stand-by ”.

“ We call them Stand-bys. It's when we get the message through that They are coming . . . on their way ! Then we know we have to stand-by—that is, be ready for a lively time here ! Three or four pitched battles ! We are getting on—we have to avenge Woodbridge. We'll bring them down soon like one o'clock—cover the Marsh with powdered Germans and bits of goldbeater's skin (that's what my little model is made of)—oh, yes, they'll come to-night ! It's ideal weather

for them. You know, we fellows here don't pass the time of day, we just nod to each other and say, 'Fine night for a Zepp!' My barber at Woodbridge, when he takes the towel off my neck, says 'It's for to-night, sir, eh?' I with my big gun am a bit of a magician to him, you see, because I'm bound to get first intelligence. I and my pals have got the necessary. . . ."

So he rambled on about the unseen enemy, kites and targets, guns and warnings, until we got down the hill at last and into the bay of green that, before the sea retired, was blue. We drew nearer to the little row of red roofs aligned on the edge of the stretch of shingle that I had been sighting all along. Not many roofs—only those of the coastguards' station, a public house, two or three houses, and one long low bungalow composed of four or five workmen's cottages run into one. All the chimneys of this composite house were covered with wholesome ivy and there was a blaze of cheerful garden flowers about its feet. That was where I was going to stay and there was the architect's wife, in a drawing-room made of two whole cottages, waiting to receive me, using her primordial talent of needlework for her country's sake, much as medieval ladies were used to sew banners for their lords. By the shape, she appeared to be making kites—one didn't know for what immediate purpose but it was bound to have something to do with killing!

To me, prepared by daily, hourly talk of imminence, the little low line of dwellings that made up our abode had a doomed look, so much was doing there or might be done, in the sense in which we all abounded those days. Yet, on the face of it, so idyllic, soft, social, and harmless! The white of the open flowers of the tobacco plant, the red of stocks and the mauve blobs of scabious all round the little wicket gates, made a suggestive scheme of colour—as it were striped and pied banners and Union Jacks, disposed all round the cottages, while yellow poppies flared out and blazed among the acres of shingle in front. Yes, Shingle Street was just a gay little colony staring out to sea, connected with civilization only by the telephone lines radiating towards the inland cliffs of Woodbridge across the Marsh behind us where, only three days ago, six little children were maimed and killed.

Inside, this cottage home was like a rococo palace, full of pictures and damask coverings, mirrors, polished inlaid cabinets, Duerer engravings, tall clocks, and Chippendale chairs, and at least two of Mrs. Woodhouse's harpsichords. . . . All this beauty lying bare with only an old rickety roof between it and the heavy foot of Destiny, uplifted high in the air above! . . .

The embittered militant who was my host said in a disappointed tone, "We ought to have heard something by now. . . . But as it is—no—nothing to-night, I'm afraid! Let's have dinner!"

We sat down, seven or eight of us. There was still hope. The officers

were all there—"standing-by." Amiable, lively, and keen on their food. The shining wood of the cabinets reflected the light of the masked candles framed in their gilt girandoles. Behind glass doors more glass gleamed mysteriously. Two great Worcester bowls held the so apposite decorations—flowers in war colours, red, yellow, and blue, no hint of effeminacy in the way of gypsophila or maidenhair fern or such ballroom decoration. The gold on the men's cuffs twinkled as glasses were raised to quaff the purple wine. We were comfortable, yet excited. In one single moment The Foot might be put down and, as in a vision of Piers Plowman, all these pretty *gestes* of civilization might be pashed to atoms! To-night, of all nights, a raid was not particularly to be expected, you understand, but for the moment romance got the better of materialism and one almost preferred to think of it so, and like "Love in drinking songs", desire to "spice the fair banquet with the dust of death".

After dinner our hostess played and an officer sang. I think the song chosen was *Nuits d'Amour* (who cares who wrote it?) and then one by one the men slunk out about their business and we three women were left alone in the stifling atmosphere procured by the heavy curtains that had to be drawn close. Mrs. C. opened one of the harpsichords and played some Purcell—*Brighton Sands*, to be particular. The tenuous sounds, sweet unto pain, like taps on the tenderest, most responsive of drums, reached, no more than did the lights, the corners of the room and the belt of damask folds that shut it in from the night. It was all ghostly, unreal, even as the danger we supposed ourselves to be then and there affronting. . . .

Our husbands did not return. But they had promised to come and warn us if there were anything doing. Every time the sentry on his beat passed the window, the crescendo and diminuendo of his tread startled us. We expected to see the heavy *portière* over the door pushed aside—no more than that, but it would signify that the business of the night had begun.

Mrs. C's usually white face was flushed. We knew why. It was not the heat so much as the net vision of remorselessly contemplated cruelties that were pressing upon this delicate sensorium that could interpret and render the queer shifty music of Purcell. We all jumped when the curtain parted and the chauffeur, weakly and past military age, back from a run of eight or ten miles inland, entered. He desired to talk of the perils and dangers through which he had passed. They were not very great. He repeated over a glass of wine that the sentries were as jumpy as could be and one of them had tried to bayonet him as he passed because he was slow in answering.

He departed and one of our sentries passed again: to our excited nerves it seemed the tread of an armed legion. . . .

"What I can't stand is the step that doesn't stop!" Mrs. C. said



fretfully. What she meant no one knew. It was all part of the universal jumpiness. At last a strong white hand, with a signet ring on the little finger, pushed the curtains aside and her husband came in, looking annoyed and bored. He fell into a chair and stretched his legs. . . .

"Well, we had better all go to bed," he said, "nothing doing to-night. We'd have been sure to have had a warning before this. They are giving us a rest and taking one themselves. Time to sweep up the bolts and rivets. I hear they are lying about the floor of those darned machines like blackbeetles when the maid comes down in the morning."

We obeyed. Mrs. C's maid came along with me and asked if I were afraid of sleeping alone at the far end of the bungalow, nearest the coastguards' station, where I would be likely to hear the reveillé first. I answered truthfully enough: No. I remembered in this connection the speech of one of Elizabeth's admirals *re* that old Spanish attack on our shores—"We are as near God (or Death, is it?) by sea as on land." The fine phrase merely expressed my own particular sense of resignation to the terror, all unauthorized by the rules of war, under which we were all living. Other people say, according to their idiosyncrasy: "If they come, they come!" or, "We can but die once!" It matters very little how or whence one procures the bit of Dutch courage which one needs.

When the maid had gone I opened very carefully, so as to control the glare of the one candle I was allowed to light, the front door of my own particular cottage-bedroom. Closing it behind me to shut off the light, I stood in the tiny strip of garden, lit only by the closed white eyes of the tobacco plants and looked over the wicket on to the beach and down and up to the sea and heaven, merged alike in dull, blue, moonless quiet, spreading across to the alien Lager of Kiel or Cuxhaven, or wherever it was! The latter, the sailors said. The commodious exercising ground of wan water was free to the enemy as well as to us. . . . Would they use it to-night?

I had got the Zeppelin-fever people talked of, badly, now. It is, I fancy, something like the cannon fever which Goethe felt and described at Valmy and, like him, I would not have *not* felt it for the world. My nerves quivered responsive, were strung and tense alternately, as I have seen a cat's whole body tremble when she first envisages her prey. My prey was a strong emotion of a peculiar kind which had to-day been sedulously led up to and fostered, and it seemed as though I were going to be cheated of it. . . .

The waves of excitement subsided, swelled, and subsided again. And, like the sleepy Belgian refugee who flings himself down upon the straw in the Palais de Glace at Ghent, so wonderfully described by Miss May Sinclair, I lay down mostly dressed on my bed. . . .

"Lighten our darkness. . . ." Nay, I did not dare to proffer that selfish prayer. I had been so worked up that I could not pray for an

undisturbed night. I tried to console myself by reflecting on the babies who were going to be spared while I missed my sensation.

\* \* \*

I was awakened suddenly. A tap at my window and the rough voice of an A.A.C.

“We’ve had a warning. Tell Mrs. C.”

The Peace of Purcell was broken. There was, after all, to be a Stand-by that night. Being at the end of the cottages and the nearest to the aerodrome I was the first to be warned. I must get up and strike a match, light a candle and run along the passage connecting the whole line of bungalows, to tell Mrs. C.

The zest of terror presaged—and come true—was so strong on me that I did not stop to strike that match or light that candle, or to put on a dressing-gown or shoes. There was, of course, plenty of time. “They” would not be here yet. Barefoot in the dark, I raced along to the other end of the row of cottage doors and shouted my message. In a second the passage was alive; we were all jostling each other. That was only because the space between the walls was so narrow. The people who filled it were quite composed. My host, in pyjamas, hovered on the sill of one lighted doorway: my hostess, at another, calmly shouldered the sleeves of her kimono. The faithful maid was occupied in finding her master’s revolver which he “thought” he had left in the drawing-room. “Mind, it’s loaded!” Our other defenders were finding their own. In another five minutes there was not a male left in the house, or houses, and Mrs. C. and I were laying a meal for the hungry men who would come in at dawn, say, when their vigil—or active service—was over, and stoke for nuts.

Scraps of information began to leak down to us. “They are at Woodbridge again,” the maid told me, carefully laying a fork in its place. “Whereabouts is Woodbridge?” say I. “Oh, not our way. They won’t come over us. I’d go back to bed if I were you. You’ll hear them fast enough, madam, if they do come. It’s a fearful noise.”

A noise, by all accounts, like the “blip-blop” of a motor-bicycle, only ten times louder, all the reports merged, as if the machine were progressing under water, a matter of continuous explosion. Mrs. C. said, “a coarse, strident noise, like the voices of those people themselves. Portentous! . . . you don’t know. . . .” Mrs. C. became what the French call lyrical—“I hope even now you won’t know what it is to be under a Zepp, dumping murder. . . . One is like an animal ramping along the ground while a thunderstorm is going on and the bolts falling. The father and mother of a Zeppelin are unspoken curses.”

The other woman guest, pausing as she covered the beef with a napkin, said, “I declare if a Zepp came over us now”—we both

looked up—"and a German fell out of it I should snatch this knife up from the table and stick it into him even if his back were broken. You'll feel just like that about it if they come to-night. Go to bed. The men won't want us about when they come in."

I went back to my sectional room and called to mind a north country superstition of my childhood about a noise in the sky that I used often to hear in the autumn, when the flocks of solan geese were flying in droves over the Yorkshire moors. The local people call it the "Gabble retchet" or the "gabriel hounds". Our English nurse would have it that they were the unbaptized souls of the little children that Herod slew; the German one that it was the crew of damned souls led by the Wild Huntsman, condemned for hunting on a Saint's Day to lead his pack for ever in Hell.

I slept while they stood-by, so they would have it. Through sounds that suggested the noise of a hundred horse-power motor-cycle under water, through the flashing lights that would make day in my little room! Through the mild clatter, at any rate, of the knives and forks that we had laid so carefully for the tired warriors who were to come in to stoke at dawn.

I do not know to this day if they kidded me? If it were a raid it must have been a very mean little one, not worth sitting up for.

\* \* \*

In the clear cold morning light I wandered about on the beach and brooded over my disappointment. It was misty and still and a little portentous. An occasional foghorn, like the grunt of some creature penned, broke now and then through the sense of hot smother. When the mist cleared a little a fussy water-plane showed, ploughing zealously backwards and forwards along the line of beach, and once or twice a sullen detonation which might have been a gun. . . . My fellow guest who came out to bathe noticed it too.

"A gun?"

"No, that sounds more like a mine." She shrugged her shoulders.

"Who knows?"

"Well, if there really *was* a raid I shall see it all in the papers."

"That you won't," she said proudly. "The papers are coddling people. But it's no use keeping *us* ignorant because *we* are in it—standing-by all the time. It's only in the daytime we can think of anything else than reprisals for murder." She felt so very strongly, this graceful tenuous lady! "We'll go into Woodbridge and cheer you up a bit. Show you the broken houses and the museum. There's a live cat there that fell out of a Zepp that one old man treasures as the apple of his eye and a petrol tank riddled with bullets which another swears came from the same place. The day after the first bomb fell you couldn't get along the Woodbridge road for hand-carts crammed with babies they daren't leave at home. It was like a fair."

We went in and she showed me a letter she had received from an English woman married to a Frenchman in Provence. It ran :—"The place is simply lovely . . . the only thing one would complain of is the want of sympathy for those that are less lucky. Sometimes I could wish for a Taube to pass and enliven the people and make them realize the misfortunes of their fellow creatures !"

The Provençal is still the Provençal, careful and pleasure-loving, and, of course, the Alemanni only held part of the north of France.

The day was necessarily flat. We gathered mushrooms and looked at kites and the little model Zepp in the shed. I touched it and it gave me an odd sensation, like handling a sloughed snake-skin. The night ! The night ! We feared and longed for it as the Germans did *Der Tag*. Later we were taken for a drive through the country of Fitzgerald, passing by the garden where bloom still the roses of Naishápur.

We rumbled loudly through roads where hollies and oak trees of four hundred years old made dusk of daylight. Peering sideways as we drove I could see the gleam of sunset, criss-crossed by the wanton stretchings forth of lean gnarled boughs that had warped and canted over and lay now where they had fallen. I could imagine Rackham fairies flitting about among them on the close paste of dead leaves that made the floor of the wood. Such a waste of material would never have been allowed at the hands of German culture, its silvery, hoary vagaries would have been Prussianized out of existence !

So in thought one returned to the present-day nightmare and by the time we sat down to dinner we were sure it would be "all right"—we had still got to stand by. We were going to give them Hell—they would get a good doing !

Mrs. C. was too tired to play the harpsichord. Mrs. F's young soldier friend was just ordered off to the front and she was sad enough. She was making something out of mosquito net and bands of whale-bone, adapting it for protection against the flies which infest the place where he was going. He tried it on several times—he did not in the least seem to mind looking ridiculous. "I am meat," he said deprecatingly, "cannon fodder, eh ?" Then Miss G. cried a little. Mrs. C. in her red dress, like shed blood a day old, wandered about and complained of the heat. . . . The men came near us no more that evening and after laying supper for them we went to bed. Mrs. C. promised to call me this time if they came. She had found me the night before sleeping the sleep of the *unjust*—so she said—and had forborne to wake me as, though there were noises, there was nothing to be seen.

So the great Stand-by had "petered out", for me. All I saw of death before I left was the body of a little grey seal thrown up by the sea and laid on a bench awaiting decent burial—or the pot. Looking pathetic and astonishingly like a murdered baby.

# UNEMPLOYMENT CAMP

(A PAUSE FOR REFLECTION)

By P. G. HARTLEY

HE WAS A little man behind a big desk. Until he spoke he was almost insignificant, but immediately the words came from his lips, his confident sincerity was apparent. I knew then why he held the post he did, and why the organization which he controlled had continued to be a force even though the War had finished fifteen years earlier.

Two weeks before this I had ceased to be an undergraduate ; a magnanimous university had granted me a degree, and then turned me out into a world which appeared to have very little use for young men who were insufferably self-assertive and abysmally ignorant. Yet, I was waiting cheerfully in London for that world to lay itself at my feet.

A chance remark about the growing volume of unemployment had given me to think and, as the result, here I was in the office of the general secretary of a huge social welfare organization. His chief attraction at the moment was the fact that he knew more about unemployment and the unemployed than the whole of the Ministry of Labour put together.

I told him briefly that I wanted to find out about the unemployed, and especially about the younger generation, and concluded by asking, could he please help me to do so ?

He could ; even better, he would give me a chance to find out for myself. If I dared, I could go to one of the camps.

"The camps ?" I echoed.

"Yes, the camps," he replied. Then he explained that the Government had set up camps in various parts of the country to which youngsters from the distressed areas were sent to be "reconditioned" and to be taught a trade.

The Government provided the camp officers and the instructors while the social organisation sent a resident to look after the leisure time of the lads who were there. There was a resident's bed empty at one of the camps ; if I wished, I could occupy it.

A few days later, complete with a traditional English wardrobe, I set out for the camp. A quick train took me to Cambridge, and a slow one beyond into the flat, black lands of Norfolk.

It was almost sunset on a perfect August evening when the train deposited me and my goods on a small wayside station, where two ruddy-faced persons were waiting for me. One of them was the district supervisor, and the other was the doyen of the residential officers of the camps in the neighbourhood.

A tiny motor car took us over several miles of flat road towards the camp. Wisely, the other two men in the car did not tell me anything about the experience in front of me. "Go carefully," was all they said.

The camp was not a camp at all. It was a series of semi-permanent buildings set in the form of a quadrangle. The buildings were of brick and corrugated iron, and they were painted a bright yellow. A green lawn was in the middle of the quadrangle, and the broad path round it was covered with brown gravel.

Each building was long, and only one storey high. A martial note was struck by a watchman at the gate, while there was a flagstaff with a Union Jack at its head in the centre of the lawn.

The car turned in at the gate, and drew up in front of the smallest of the buildings. In this the staff lived. It resembled, I am told, an officers' mess at a base camp during the War. There was a big lounge containing a radio set, and several untidy and heavily used club arm-chairs. A few brown-faced, youngish men were sprawling in them, relaxed after a day out of doors. These men were the camp officers.

The district supervisor introduced me to them. They were pleasant but not particularly interested, obviously cynical as to the value of a resident "social officer" in their camp. They regarded him as a necessary evil imposed on them by the bureaucratic will at Headquarters.

In the dining-room an excellent tea was waiting. It was one of those sensible teas beginning with two boiled eggs, and proceeding via the fruit and cream stage to the final large slice of sweet cake. After doing full justice to it I began to feel a little more cheerful.

By the time tea was over, the sun had set, and the flag had been furled for the night. The lounge was lighted by a noisy kerosene jet, and dusk was creeping over the countryside.

After a cigarette and a few minutes of desultory conversation, the district supervisor suggested that it was time I met the men.

We crossed the quadrangle to the recreation hut, the largest of them all, and entered by a back door. To my surprise, this gave by a short passage directly on to a raised platform, in front of which were seated row after row of the men. There were two hundred of them in all. They had washed themselves, but were still in their working uniform—a white sleeveless singlet, corduroy trousers, and big boots. Almost to a man, their arms were folded, and the kerosene light threw into striking relief their muscles, which were beginning to develop magnificently as the result of regular food and regular work. Their faces were, for the most part, very young, but the eyes of those I could see in the front rows had a glint of questioning distrust, due doubtless to the experiences they had suffered before they came to the camp.

The district supervisor stood up and by way of introduction gave a brief version of my career to date. In other circumstances, it would have made me smile, but for the moment I was horrified for I realised

that in something less than thirty seconds I should be called on to make a speech to a highly critical audience.

When the supervisor had finished, the men clapped politely and waited for me to talk.

There I was, fresh from the university, knowing only the life of the more or less well-to-do, standing before a group of men of my own age, people who had known hunger and incoherent despair in their worst forms, and proposed to them as a leader.

At any rate, I made my speech, and was fortunate in the fact that my home was on the edge of one of the areas from which a good proportion of the men came. The slightest trace of a local accent made the men accept me as they would not have done otherwise.

I do not remember exactly what I said, but the gist of it was this : I knew as little about them as they did about me, and if I looked a queer fish to them, they looked equally queer to me. Therefore, since we were dumped here in the back o' beyond, the soundest thing to do was to get together for our common good.

The sentiment seemed to find favour with the hearers, and when the cheering had subsided, a concert followed. That is to say, any one of the men who could (or thought he could) entertain his fellows climbed on to the platform and did his bit. Some of them sang songs, and others told stories. Occasionally, a story was a little strong, but it received no applause because the district superintendent was on the platform.

The most popular songs were " Don't go down the mine, daddy. Daddy, don't go down the mine ", and " Lily of Laguna ". Alternate verses were roared out by the assembled company.

The applause at the end of these performances was deafening, and gradually the men worked up very simple, straightforward emotions. It was obvious that though they had known hunger and the various knocks of hard poverty, they were much younger in spirit than I was. For just before the close of the proceedings, the district superintendent stood up, and, at the one moment when such a thing was possible, he prayed. The men did the same, following his lead without any unctuous regard for the man who could make or break them, but with simple sincerity, quite unselfconscious.

Then everybody sang " God save the King ", and it was bedtime.

As a new resident had arrived, it was a special occasion, and rather more latitude than usual was allowed. When everyone had tried to shake off my right arm, they surged out into the dusky quadrangle, and marched round it in single file, singing a sort of chant which made the welkin ring.

It is difficult to convey any impression of the noise and the scene, but it suggested at the time certain sections of some films of American college life which occasionally seep through into this country. But to

that one must add the background of lighted huts, and the huge poplars which are characteristic of the Norfolk country, and one must bear in mind that there were the youngsters whom a distinguished Prime Minister had recently dubbed "human scrap".

Finally, half an hour later, the lights were extinguished, and the whole camp settled down for the night.

I went to my room in the staff quarters and sank down on the little camp bed, tired to death.

Scarcely an hour seemed to pass before someone came knocking at the door.

The person on entering proved to be one of the men. He was wearing the ordinary working uniform, except that instead of the boots he wore sandshoes. He carried a cup of tea. It was a great comfort to know that that acme of civilisation, the cup of tea in bed, was not to be denied one in this remote place.

The man—or rather the boy, for he could not have been more than eighteen years—explained that he was on orderly duty for the week. Apparently it was a job that was liked, for he seemed to be highly satisfied with life in general.

After a cold bath, I went along to the dining-room. Only two members of the Government staff were there, the chief officer of the camp, a remarkably suave and pleasant man in the early thirties, and a ruddy bright-faced youngster with a shock of wiry hair. He was the instructor in farriery. During my stay at the camp he became one of my best friends; the men respected him, and even though he had a name which lent itself perfectly to vulgar parody, the men, so far as I know, never once took advantage of it.

He was direct and straightforward; he was fair in all his dealings and he stood for no nonsense; he was never foul-mouthed, but he always preserved a firm and equable authority. Such was not the case with all the members of the staff. There were one or two men who had been non-commissioned officers during the War. They still retained that old army belief that the only way to get things done was to abuse the doer. Believe me, the men resented it, and these officers suffered in consequence.

Not all the members of the staff appeared at breakfast, for some of them were married, and lived in their own houses in the neighbourhood.

For a few days I did little else but carry on in the manner suggested by the district supervisor. He was careful to tell me that the programme for keeping the men occupied was purely my own affair, and that he had only drawn up a scheme to be put in action until I found my feet. During those few days it became possible to get a modest insight into the section of the British populace which these lads represented.

Most of them were under twenty-five years of age, and all of them



had been unemployed for a longish period. They came from the most diverse parts of the land—stocky, dark-faced, suspicious youngsters from South Wales who, when they sang, suddenly brought the light of Celtic mysticism to their eyes, were side by side with blond giants from the North-East Coast, lads in direct line from the Viking raiders who first settled there in the ninth century. There were millhands and engine-minders and textile workers from the West Riding, as dour as the Scots, and with the sound common sense which comes from a heavy admixture of different races. But, at times, they had moods of the blackest despair when they ached for a return to their northern hills, and their smoky streets and dirty flagstones. An occasional exceptionally hardy or exceptionally neurotic one would disappear. No notice would be taken for a day, because by that time the boldest spirit was usually broken by flinty roads. Very occasionally, the police had to be informed, and a few days later the lad was reported as having reached his home again.

The system of choosing the boys who were to go to the camps was simple and direct. It recalled the military story of the sergeant who said to his men, "I want three volunteers, you, you, and you." When the Commissioners from London visited the distressed areas, they interviewed a number of likely lads who appeared to have the ability to benefit from a reconditioning course. It was suggested that they should go to a camp, on a purely voluntary basis, of course. The experience of others had taught the lads that it was most unwise to refuse the invitation, for, if they did so, the Commissioners naturally assumed that they were not taking all possible steps to find work. When that happened—well, the Commissioners held the purse-strings where the dole was concerned.

The process of reconditioning the men consisted of teaching them some useful occupation (in this camp it was road-making) for which there was a moderate labour demand, obliging them to keep regular hours, to submit to a modest but inflexible discipline, and to eat plenty of good food. That was the realm of the Government officers.

The men's leisure, which they did not know how to use, was my problem. Practically every one of them came from a district where it was the custom for the young sparks to congregate on the street corners when work was over, or during the whole day, if there were no work, and discuss the possible winners of the 3.30 race, or their respective girl friends, or the amount of beer they could themselves drink, were the opportunity offered. Occasionally, they would be joined by a political agitator, who would inflame them by mildly destructive criticism of their rulers, and by a few sonorous phrases which could easily be carried in simple heads.

The boys knew only so much of the country as could be gathered from occasional one-day trips to the sea on Bank Holidays. All the rest

of their leisure time, ever since they could toddle, had been divided between cinemas and football matches.

Now, removed miles from the bright lights of the streets, the cinemas, and the football crowds, they did not know what to do with their unoccupied time.

The library of tattered books did not attract them ; they were almost too lethargic to play football among themselves. They had no girls to provide them with amusement and diversion, and their only outlet for their suppressed instincts was heavy grumbling in public and self-abuse of various sorts in private.

That was the problem set before me very clearly in those first few summer days at the camp.

The Government and the social organisation which I represented had provided a good deal of sports equipment—a boxing ring, gloves, cricket and football tackle, swimming suits, and so on. It was not easy to set some enthusiasm in motion, for my own enthusiasm for organised sports was strictly limited ; but it had to be done, and cricket claimed a good deal of attention.

One night in the week was given up to boxing ; it was an immense success, for in three rounds of two minutes each it was possible to work off a good deal of superfluous animal spirits, while the spectators had an excellent opportunity of shouting themselves hoarse if they wished.

I wanted to find some way of providing the boys with swimming accommodation, for contact with the water, with as few clothes on as possible, does anybody good.

After a little scouting round, a neighbouring squire was found who had a perfect stream running through his grounds. At one point the stream broadened out into a clear, almost circular, pool, a bathing place designed for the gods, but seldom used even by men. Through diplomacy and the district supervisor, the squire was persuaded to let the boys bathe here on two evenings in each week. I gave my personal assurance that they would respect his flowerbeds, which were the old gentleman's greatest joy in life.

The innovation was hailed with delight at the camp, for the late summer was very warm, and the evenings were ideal for bathing. With due solemnity the importance of the privilege was explained, and it was gently hinted that the rich were not all ogres trampling on the faces of the poor.

The number of boys who could bathe at any one time was limited by the number of bathing suits available, and strict precedence had to be observed.

On the first bathing day, the swimming suits were distributed in the camp and the lucky ones streamed off across the fields to the squire's domain. They scrupulously respected the flower beds, but they had

given no promise concerning anything else, and they spread themselves out over the unaccustomed luxury of perfect lawns. For a time they roamed about at will, but at length they were rounded up and confined to the near neighbourhood of the pool. Once they were undressed and were larking about in the water, it became very clear how flimsy are outward distinctions.

But the chill of the evening soon made itself felt, and with difficulty they were persuaded to come out of the water. A number of them began to run about with nothing on, impelled doubtless by a latent exhibitionism. I had to put a stop to that, not because I objected to their nakedness but because the squire's maids might be shocked or otherwise tempted.

On the whole, the bathing was a great success. In fact, it was the greatest success of my stay in the camp.

On one embarrassing occasion, the boys were just climbing out of the water when the squire and two ladies strolled across the lawn, taking a short walk before dinner. Seeing the small crowd, the three people moved across the lawn to the opposite bank of the stream to watch the fun. As it happened, they arrived at a particularly unfortunate moment, for a twenty-year-old giant, who had been dismissed from the Welsh Guards for breaches of discipline, was standing in his shirt, and lifting up his voice to the heavens in a stream of the most blood-curdling profanity. I always set myself dead against unimaginative swearing for obvious reasons, but this occasion was unique. Never in my life, before or since, have I heard profanity of such rich variety. It was perfect, especially as it emanated from a beautifully muscled, perfectly proportioned figure of indignant youth. I hesitated for a second to stop him, for his grievance must have been real to warrant such a matchless exhibition. But the presence of the man to whose goodwill the privilege of bathing was due, and with him, two elderly ladies, made protest a necessity. Accordingly, I stood before the man, looked up into his face a good six inches above the top of my head, and gave him a thorough verbal dressing down. His hands twitched, obviously with a desire to use them on me, for he could doubtless have broken my slim body in two with the greatest of ease. But I went on looking at him, having exhausted my supply of permissible invective, and in a couple of seconds, his hand went to the salute and he said "Sorry, sir". Then he continued to dress in quietness.

The squire watched the scene and then gently led his two guests back to the house. Afterwards, he told me that both the women were deaf and that, as for himself, the incident had been very satisfactory, in so much as it had reassured him that the upper classes were born to rule. "Poor man," I thought, "you don't know how I felt when I was facing that enormous ex-Guardsman."

But bathing, boxing, games, and so on could not entirely make up for the loss of films and females. In spite of these efforts, grumblings and unrest were clearly apparent. The Government officers were seriously worried. They reflected that the camp was miles away from anywhere. There was a single elderly policeman in the village, and a single telephone in the camp itself. There were about twelve members of the staff in all, and there were some two hundred strong youths. The staff would have a bad time if trouble were to break out.

Finally, it did.

The cause was potatoes. One hot day late in the summer, the lads straggled back from their work for lunch, and entered the mess-hut. The potatoes were served, and, reluctantly it must be admitted, the cook had hardly excelled himself. I know that this was true, because in the staff dining-room also complaints were explicit, and precisely stated.

But the men did not content themselves with grumbling. Instead, after the meal, they went in a body to one of the sleeping huts and locked themselves in.

At the end of the lunch hour the bell rang for a resumption of work, but nobody appeared. The cause was perfectly clear.

The windows of the sleeping-hut were lined with staring, angry faces. In order to outface them, the chief of the Government staff walked up and down before the hut in question for a while. Nobody came out, and eventually he retired to his office and waited. It must have been an uncomfortable promenade, for one felt that a boot or some other heavy object was likely to strike him in the back of the neck at any moment.

The stoppage continued for an hour or more. The sun was shining directly on to the roof of the occupied hut, and the inside must have been like an oven, for nearly two hundred angry young men were crowded into a space normally considered sufficient only for forty or fifty. Presently, a deputation left the hut and proceeded to the office. The members looked very sheepish, for nothing at all seemed to be happening. The static position of Authority was awe-inspiring.

Naturally, the Government chief refused to treat with the deputation. He pointed out that all the men would soon be hungry and ill, cooped up in an iron hut on a hot day.

So, before sunset, the strike fizzled out; another example of the efficacy of bluff when officially applied.

Trouble of this sort was directly due to the unsettlement which followed a complete change in the conditions of living, and in the manner of living. The total stay in the camp of any man was not more than three months, and during that time he had an opportunity to resent the imposition of a discipline which, at its worst, was extremely

light, and to grumble loudly. The food, the regularity, the country air were building these boys up into a race of commendably healthy youngsters ; the change was visible from the first week. But they had not time enough to adapt themselves to the conditions of country life.

With a few notable exceptions, the stronger they became, the more they missed their normal surroundings, for they knew instinctively that with their new strength and brown skins they would shine in their friends' company like bright stars in a dull firmament.

The only possible way of overcoming this problem was to leaven their country existence with a spice of town delight. That was not easy. There were no funds available for extra amusements, nor were there the means of getting them to the camp even if the necessary money had been forthcoming.

The men had about four shillings a week each for pocket-money ; that was the only fund on which anyone could draw. It was spent in various ways. A good deal of it was used to buy stamps, and a little of it was spent on beer in the local public houses. Even if the whole lot had been used in this way it was insufficient to permit excessive drinking.

There were two towns within easy reach of the camp. Both were approximately thirty miles distant from the camp ; both were market towns, the centres for a considerable rural area, and both had either a cinema or a theatre.

By genial bullying, the doyen of the officials in the local camps worked out a fine scheme for using the amenities of these towns. He persuaded the local garage proprietor to convey thirty of the men by omnibus from one camp each week to one of the towns mentioned. Fares were at a very much cut rate. The man was persuaded (rightly) that in so doing he was acting as a national benefactor. Tea was provided at one penny per head, while the Government kitchen at the camp nobly prepared a parcel of sandwiches sufficient for every man for the whole of the afternoon. Accordingly, it became the custom for a load of the men to start out for one of these two towns each Saturday afternoon when work was finished.

On arrival, they were firmly escorted round the historical buildings, in which both towns abounded. They would take tea and then for an hour or so they would wander round the streets at will, and meet again at the entrance to a prearranged cinema or theatre. After seeing the show (for which, by the way, specially reduced prices had been obtained) they would climb into the omnibus and return through the night to the camp. They had a habit of singing loudly on the journey, but they " piped down " when passing through a village. Occasionally they woke a reply from a night bird, and when they did this they bawled all the louder for their success. The whole proceeding gave them the necessary leaven for the next week's work.

Only once was there any bother. After the cinema, I counted my

lambs into the omnibus, and found that one of them had strayed. He was the ex Welsh Guardsman. I was troubled because he was a man who, had he been married, would have been called uxorious, and I was struck for the moment with some frightful visions, and the possibility of a resounding scandal. But not for long. Ten minutes later, when I was about to report the matter to the local police station, he turned up, roaring drunk, with a foolish grin on his face; he was obviously beatifically happy. I did not make any inquiries as to where he had been; the man had probably forgotten. . . .

Really, my position in the camp was very false. For one thing, all my deepest sympathies were with the men. Contact with them had aroused an angry disgust with a social system which could permit such unemployment, and such vitiation of youth. For though these camps were an attempt to stem the advance of that vitiation, what an inadequate attempt they were! When the lads began to express their mildly perverted, hopelessly ill-founded and unbalanced political views, it was my duty to guide the conversation into less revolutionary channels. I did it, but the words stuck in my throat, and I was ashamed as I spoke them. Each Sunday morning I had to speak in the manner of a clergyman preaching a sermon. I had to advocate the ideals of Christian manliness and loyalty to this group of doubting persons whose youth had been wrecked by the cynical denial of these ideals on the part of those who should have upheld them.

I did it, because I knew that this little camp and the few others like it were green oases in the howling, depressed desert.

But this state of affairs could not continue indefinitely. One evening, two of the younger boys came to me, acutely self-conscious, with their big sheep's eyes wide open, and asked me some amazingly simple questions about self-abuse, personal hygiene, and kindred matters. Their abysmal ignorance was scarcely credible; for a time I thought they were trying an elaborate joke in bad taste. But it was apparent that they were not. Eighteen years old, they knew scarcely a thing about themselves apart from the filth and casual eroticism which they had encountered in the streets, and practised among themselves.

A few evenings later (it was curious how these things happened together) a man of about twenty-four came to me and asked if I would write a letter for him. He could not write. I did it. The letter was a love letter to his girl in a northern town. I was never more honoured than when that man trusted me to write down his most personal thoughts. But he could not write. . . .

After that I made inquiries and found that out of the two hundred men in the camp, seventeen could neither read nor write. This was the average number of illiterates which was always there. The Government officials shrugged their shoulders when I raised my voice about it.

There was obviously a serious fault somewhere in the elementary education system of which this country is so proud. Wishing to do something about it, I wrote an article on the subject for a newspaper. The article was featured, but nothing further happened except that I received a handsome cheque from the newspaper for my efforts.

Finally, I came across one of the lads one day sitting in a ditch staring at nothing in particular. After a lot of cross-examination, he told me that the relief payments given to his family were to be reduced because he was no longer at home. The sum he mentioned would be insufficient to pay the rent, let alone buy food.

"It would be better if I'd stayed in Sunderland doing nothing," he complained. "Then they wouldn't have cut the money. Because I've come away to get right for work the kids have got to be hungry. Is it fair," he added passionately, "is it fair?"

I could not but agree with him that it was grossly unfair, for at the end of his three months' period in the camp, unless he were one of the lucky people who were placed in work directly, he would return to Sunderland, to the same old round. Even with the preferential treatment which he would receive then, when jobs were vacant, he would probably have to wait several weeks before he was placed. And in that time the effect of the reconditioning would be nullified.

Obviously, my real duty was to institute a tremendous campaign for the betterment of the conditions of the workers, but I have never claimed sufficient moral force or integrity to be a leader, so I quietly wrote a long report to the authorities pointing out what I had seen. The report was courteously acknowledged, and filed away. That was all.

I realised that I too should be filed away if I stayed in the camp much longer, so one day I handed in my resignation and went back to London.

# THEY SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES

## MASS OBSERVATION AND SOCIAL NARRATIVE

*[The reports which are written for Mass Observation come largely from people whose lives are spent in a world whose behaviour, language, and viewpoint are far removed from academic science and literature. Sociologists and realistic novelists—including proletarian novelists—find it difficult if not impossible to describe the texture of this world. After reading hundreds of Mass Observation reports, we find that they tend to cover just those aspects of life which the others miss. Why is this? Because, we suggest, in these reports people are speaking in a language natural to them—their spelling, punctuation, etc., are their OWN—in spite of a uniform State education. This is hardly a “well of English undefiled” since into it continually flow more or less muddy streams from press, radio, advertising, film, and “literature”. But in actual social usage, all the jungle of words grow up together in Darwinian conflict until they establish their own ecology and functions. Contrast this functional value with the use of words by sensitive, stylist writers. Each phrase is paralysed by fear of cliché. Yet each phrase must have a class or family resemblance to one of the known accents of literature. In reaction against this paralysis, there is a general wish among writers to be UNLIKE the intellectual, LIKE the masses. Much “proletarian fiction” is a product of this wish. But it is not enough for such fiction to be ABOUT proletarians, if they in their turn become a romantic fiction, nor even for it to be BY proletarians, if it is used by them as a means of escaping out of the proletariat.]*

*Mass Observation is among other things giving working-class and middle class people a chance to speak for themselves, about themselves. How little they are affected by the paralysis of language, even in their first attempts, may be judged from the extracts from Mass Observation reports which follow.]*

C. M. and H. J.

### FROM REPORT ON SELF

The last child of six, I was an accidental conception, there being six years between my sister and I. My mother spoilt me as a child, father ignored me. Our family had just settled down to civil life after many years of travelling. My brothers and sisters all left home whilst I was still young. Father's intolerance and cussedness was the cause, as I learned later, and still later I learned the cause of his cussedness—cancer. No one suspected his disease which killed him after an unpleasant illness.

As a child from the age of nine I was an enthusiastic choirboy, once leading a strike of my colleagues for an injustice done to our organist and choirmaster. At the age of 7 or 8 I remember being the boy who



was told off to look after other small boys whose bowels had suddenly lost their power of retention.

At the elementary school I won a scholarship giving me a grant and five years free training at a secondary school. Here my work was moderate. I enjoyed singing, speaking French, geometry, and the annual play for the school concert. I was soundly drubbed by the English master for criticising the literary style of the Bible adversely, and I gave mother the excuse that I wanted to be an actor to explain why I wasn't doing much prep.

Throughout my school life my home life was a separate entity, school and home neither met nor mixed. Neither helped the other. At 16 I left school failing to matriculate and got a job by my own efforts with — by whom I am still employed.

When in the choir I made the acquaintance of a homosexual padre. A great chap in many ways he started a serious train of thought about religion and life. I hadn't thought much before but with the passage of my 'teens I began to read more and more, took an extra-mural course in psychology and woke up to a new adult world of thought and feeling.

At work I was industrious but not specially able. My industry gained me notice and in 1929 I was able to specialize in mechanical accounting.

Although I had had a girl friend when I began working the office attractions were much more impressive than local ladies. I contracted a strong affection, by telephone originally, with an operator and we became very friendly. Eventually as too serious-minded young people do we settled down to save our money to be married. I left home for convenience and cheapness. The scheme worked well but slowly till the summer of 1932 when a gradually worsening situation came to a climax. I flew off the handle, left my woman, went with a younger and very lovely girl, took a room on the other side of London and began quite voluntarily to blue my savings.

The new and lovely lady was daughter to a most curious household in a near-slum. Mother a slattern, father unknown, home dirty—but the girl a marvel of level-headedness and the saner virtues, to say nothing of her beauty. In March 1933 I was moved to — (North of England) and the new romance became more difficult. We even tried an elopement on August Bank Holiday 1933 but were frustrated by crazed and half-drunk parents. We gave up in good grace and decided to go our several ways.

In — lodgings I soon grew tired of bad cooking and in July 1934 I married my old love. We are thoroughly happy and live a normal married life.

#### FROM REPORT ON ENVIRONMENT

Live in a street practically closed in, the backs of one row of houses face our back, and the fronts of another row of houses face our front,

across the bottom there is a Methodist Sunday School & at the top an open Meadow, across the Meadow is the public maternity Hospital, we live about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile out of town which is mostly up hill, plenty of open country around. all hilly. Where I work is in the railway coal yard, very dreary & dull, it is situated in the lowest part of the town, as I look out my office window to my left I see coal waggons, beyond them on the hill side a row of rather dirty looking houses, and beyond them a hill side of green fields very drab and steep, with a pylon for electric top and bottom. in front the railway arcade more waggons, the fruit shed, a mill, and two mill chimneys to the right. the railway weigh bridge the yard gates the bottom of the main street which I can see about half, with a hotel at the bottom, shops, a garage & a cinema as it goes up to a left turn. at my back there is some spare ground on which traveling fairs stay—a few dirty shops with the passenger station which I cannot see to the back.

The life of the district where I live is practically all home life, with the exception of a few shops. The life of the district where I work, is all industry. I am surrounded by the station, Mills, Engineering Shops, and a few smaller industries.

#### FROM REPORT ON A NORMAL DAY

This morning I started work with a new firm, specialists in oil, petrol & water pumps in my usual capacity as centre-lathe turner, I awoke early, washed and pulled on my greasy coveralls, I felt pleasantly excited & a "lets get at it" feeling at the same time, I wanted to see the type & class of work so I could form an estimate of my chances of success & steady employment with my new employers, checked my tool-bag over, admired the intricacies and splendid workmanship of some U.S.A. caliper gauges I possess, I like the very best in tools and save till I can buy just what I want, my tools are a hobby with me, had my breakfast & watched the clock more than usual, left for work twice as early as I usually do as I was carrying  $\frac{1}{2}$ cwt of tools and riding a bike and intended riding slow and sure, arrived, put my bike away, introduced myself to my immediate work-neighbours & indulged in a little "pumping" (hours, overtime, tools in stores, temperament of foreman, "Easy" or "hell driver", quality of tool-steel supplied etc) had a look over my machine, checked over the positions of gear, surfacing, traversing, lead, self-act, back-gear handles for any unfamiliar reactions, all well, no snags, orthodox-built machine, smaller class of work than my last job, pleased to find good stock of various cutting-tools in cupboard, save me making them just touch them on the grinder to conform with my personal ideas of design, a gong whirs throughout the shop, "we're off!" report to the foreman, come back with him to the machine, he compliments me on having my tools laid out etc. "cleared for action eh?" I grin and think "seems O.K., we'll get

along alright ! ” he fetches a blue-print, details the job, how he wants this, how that, is puzzled himself over one detail, walks off and whispers to another turner, smiles, comes back and rattles off the details in a more authoritative manner than before, “ Well, got it ? watertight ? O.K. ? ” “ Yes, all O.K. ” “ Right ! go to it ” and off he goes, settle down to the job, no trouble, finish it off & give it a close check-over & supalative finish as I know I’m being carefully watched at the first few jobs I do to see if I know my job (efficient) after that I can work with the minimum of supervision, I become “ alright ” “ O.K. ” my fellow workers are also covertly watching and my degree of skill puts me in a certain strata, a subtle business, in the “ social ” life of the shop, a inefficient worker, however strong a personality he may have, is never quite accepted & respected in a machine-shop “ He knows his job ” is the guinea stamp, many a man who is abhorred in his private life, finds respect and homage at his craft, & vice-versa,—11 p.m report to the foreman, he examines the job Ive completed, eyes screwed, his face clears & I know alls well before he speaks, another blue-print a brass nozzle, “ right ? ” “ right ! ” I like turning brass, the keen tools rip into it like butter, I start whistling, as I get closer to the finished nozzle, I whistle in spasms, then when I come to the final 1/1000” accuracy of size required I stop and concentrate, mind & eye completely on the job, suddenly my attention is distracted, I feel something, look up, look around, everyone is apparently working away, but there is a indefinable slowing up, a reaction known to all machine-men the note of even the motors & purring belts seems changed, I *know* its close on knocking off time I ask, “ near time, chum ? ” “ about 5 to go, mate ” thought so ! uncoil a blower (compressed air tube) and clear the swarf (metal cuttings) from my lathe, collect my tools & put them in my case, notice on wall says “ We are all honest in this shop, there is no necessity to lock up your tools ” signed by the manager, very pious I think, I bet he doesn’t forget to lock his office up, the majority of people *are* honest but—mans a weak vessel, so I lock up, Ive lost more than one favourite tool in the district, gong whirs, wash my hands, first in oil, then soap and water, hear a Northern voice in the wash place, ask him where he’s from “ Manchester, where you ? ” “ Liverpool ” little discussion how long we’ve been down here, how we like it, no place like home ! part mutual expressions of good-will, “ If you want to know anything—Im here ” “ Right ” clannishness I suppose, Ive made a immediate pal because we are both from Lancs, I help him he’ll help me, get my bike, 12.5, outside its a grand day, hot but breezy, cars glisten as they shoot by, lots of brown necks & faces, sight of cool bathers in the Social Centre make me ride harder to get to the digs for a real old scrub & change, look at my watch, the King & Queen pass through — today at 3.45 advertised time, 3½ hrs yet, bag of time, see a old pal “ Hi there, pal ” skim round the last corner. buy

a paper & cigarettes, pound of apples next door, down the road, feel good, new job, gorgeous day, money in my pocket, day & a half of leisure in front, wheel my bike down the garden, the dog rushes out & snarls then makes peculiar snuffling noises of apology, light up the bath geyser, take my overalls off, sit on a chair in my room and eat apples while I wait for hot water,—

# FROM ANOTHER REPORT ON A NORMAL DAY

(By a Housewife)

1.5 Eldest boy in to dinner. Quite forgot he'd to go back to work at 2 o/c. Rush some fried fish on to table & bread & jam for his "afters". Tell him he can have pudding for tea. He says "O.K." Good job he's good tempered. Gives me his wages 10/-. How thoughtful of his employer to give it him at dinner time! Many would not.

1.45 Having fried chips we all sit down to meal Rhubarb from garden for pudding with vanilla sauce Normans chum turns up from Biggin Hill—cheery little chap—says he didn't have dinner, just something to eat. Give him egg & chips—& pudding.

2.20 Clear away. Sid (my husband) washes up. I tidy dining room. Hectic scramble to wash twins. Mr. H—— looks in scullery window whilst I do this. He's done for the day & going home. Teases twins & self unmercifully. Tell him to come in & be paid. Does so. Finished Joy, she does look nice in the frock her grandma made. Do Micky. he hates washing & says so in no uncertain voice. Thank goodness Norman's done himself.

3.10 See Mother passing scullery window. She gets in door & twins rush at her. How smart she is for all her 71 yrs. Feel very conscious of own grubby frock & untidy hair— Take her round downstairs. She likes it & says so. Deplores bad state of decoration & the general neglect left by last tenant. I tell her it will all come right in time. She says the view is beautiful & so it is— Vastly pleased to see what is left of the Old Crystal Palace. Make her China tea.

4.0 Wash & change. Feel better. Send children out for biscuits for tea. No time to make scones I planned. Get tea. All jabbering. Much of "do you remembers" series— Always the same when Mother, Sid, & I get together. Himself goes to Bromley. Clear up tea. Mother washes up. Joy helping much to her delight. Mother asks for mending & gets a pile of it. What a picture of serenity she is sitting on the old couch— Her busy fingers flying to and fro with the needle.

7.0 Put Normans chum on bus for home. Put twins to bed.

8.0 Fly along to little general shop for last minute shopping. Meet him coming back from Bromley on bike. Looks very fit & strong in his second best tweed & sports shirt. We walk round garden.

9.30 Mother goes up to bed, & Norman too— She likes upstairs as much as down.

10.0 Go along with Sid to Local to “ have one ” Feel I’ve need of same desperately. His beer & my wine both tepid. Go along to next pub at top of hill. Beer & wine better. Enjoy walk home. Jim in from cycle ride round. Get supper. Good cheese—& Beetroots Mother brought. Fix Jim up with blankets on couch. Go up to bed. All quiet. Hear Jim lock Shed up.

11.15 Shout at Jim to put gas out—Gosh I’m tired— He’s put gas out now.

# THE PORO

(AN AFRICAN INITIATION SOCIETY)

By PAUL SHUFFREY

THE TRIBES OF the Sierra Leone hinterland have for a long time attracted the interest of students on account of the remarkable society which is responsible for the education of the men, and controls a great part of the social and political life. Similar institutions have, indeed, been observed in many parts of the world. But it is doubtful whether in any country there is a society which surpasses the Poro in importance. The changed conditions consequent on British rule do not seem to have led to any decline in power or to have impaired its functions.

Anyone who has the good fortune to make a journey through the country of the Mendi or Sherbro tribes during the dry season will not fail to notice, in certain places, evidences of unusual proceedings. As he enters the neighbourhood of an important town, he will see curious emblems made of a kind of fern fixed at the cross-roads and at other important points. If he happens to pass any women travelling by the same road, he will be surprised to hear them give a plaintive cry at short intervals as they proceed on their way. "Nyaha lo." It is a woman, they say. Getting near the town, he will hear a great noise of drums. These drums are not the ordinary drum which may be heard whenever the people amuse themselves. The note is different, and they are played in a peculiar and rather fascinating way. The time is quick and the drumming seems to go on unceasingly. The sound appears to come from a grove of great trees not far from the town, but entirely secluded from the roads and farms. Near the town a special path leads to an imposing entrance which has been constructed at the mouth of the bush. Palm leaves and grass screen the way in, and the neighbouring trees are decorated with fern. Sometimes there is a great cable of twisted fern which appears to be suspended from tree to tree, high up, and leading away into the interior of the grove. It is not likely that he would ever have an opportunity of entering the grove. The spot is very sacred, and it is reserved for the initiated. The sanctity of the place is conserved by the most stringent regulations, enforced by the aid of powerful medicines. No woman would dare to approach the entrance, and any native who might be led by curiosity to attempt an entry would very likely be compelled to submit to initiation. The Poro bush has been kept inviolate in some of the old towns for centuries. If we can imagine ourselves as initiates for once, going into the mouth of the enclosure, we should probably find a large clearing with a wide expanse of smooth ground. On one side might be rows of temporary buildings, made of palm leaves and wattle. On another side there would be a great scaffold on which the drummers are seen playing.

During our visit to the town we may have the good fortune to witness a performance of the Bini. This is heralded by a great tattoo of drums. Then a procession appears, at the head of which moves slowly an enormous creature with bowed back, wearing a kind of head mask of cylindrical shape, decorated with leopard skins and covered all over with masses of long grass, carefully prepared and combed. Before the devil, who moves very slowly, two lines of boys, dressed in an ornamental athletic costume, lead the way, dancing and turning somersaults. They advance and retreat before the god, whose slow and laborious progress permits ample time for these movements. During the procession a mournful dirge is played by a group of trumpeters with horns, repeating two notes alternately to a very slow time. At length, having arrived at the town, the procession turns and retreats to the bush in the same manner, led by the dancing messengers and keeping time to the doleful music. Then there is a sudden stillness. No sound is heard. The god appears to have fainted. The silence continues for a few moments. Suddenly there is a loud cry, followed by a roar of applause, first in the grove, and then from the public waiting outside. The god has recovered.

This is the Poro in one of its manifestations. There is no secrecy when the Bini appears in this way. The women and other uninitiated persons are there. It is far otherwise when the serious business of the society is on hand. On these occasions, the spirit is surrounded by a great concourse of members and his presence is announced by his voice, an eerie, vibrating sound of piercing shrillness. This is a signal for all women and uninitiated men to hide within their houses, battening down all doors and windows. Work ceases and there is an impressive silence. The women fall on their knees in the darkened rooms, clapping their hands to ward off the influence of the spirit. Men, however, run out, following the voice. The voice of the god is sweet, they say. These ceremonies often occur at night. It is understood that the initiates are taken from their parents in this way. Sometimes the visit leads to friction between settlers,—Mohammedans, and others who are not members,—and the society. They are apt to resent the constraint which the presence of the spirit imposes on the public.

The Poro is a secret society. It does not seem wise to accept with confidence the statements which from time to time have been published purporting to explain the grades and organization. Any person who has lived in the country and become conversant with native affairs can appraise such evidence. There are, however, features of the society which can be discerned without prying into the real secrets. There are leading characteristics which are found to reproduce themselves with marked uniformity of principle in many parts of the world. The initiation of the young men by the elders of the society accomplished through the medium of certain very significant rites ; the performance of ordeals designed to convert the whole character and effect a new birth ; the

seclusion from the society of women, rigorously enforced; the educational functions and instruction in social and moral rules, emphasized by severe methods; the play and athletic dances—all these characteristics reappear in similar societies in Africa, America, and the Pacific.

The work of the society may be regarded from various aspects. It has social and political functions. The great power which it is able to exercise on members throughout their lives is due to the rites which are performed during the period of initiation. This period varies. In some parts, remote from foreign influence, it is still extended for some years. More generally, owing to practical difficulties, the term has been curtailed. In Dapper, who described it in the seventeenth century, the initiation took five years. The rites on entry are designed to emphasise the change and rebirth of the novice. It is credibly stated that a powerful vegetable decoction is administered to create a state of anaesthesia. The youth's neck and back are decorated with skilful cicatrization. In most cases there is circumcision. His teeth are often filed to a point. These permanent records left on the person, whatever their original purpose, have a social value. Without them a man is regarded with contempt by his fellows. He looks like an unfinished piece of work, and may be seen on occasion trying to conceal his shortcoming. The notion of rebirth is completed by the conferring of a new name. The old name, given by the mother in infancy, is forgotten. The change symbolizes a departure from the limited family of the mother to a greater connection. The new birth is emphasized also by current speech. It is usual to refer to the noviciate as "dying in the Poro". The initiates are said, also, to be in "the belly of the spirit" and when they come out, the spirit is said to have "given birth". There is some reason for thinking that the novices are taught a special language, as in other African societies.

During the training the boys are taught a number of remarkable dances and, to judge by the constant drumming which is heard by those outside, dancing must be an important feature of the daily curriculum. The dancing is of a vigorous, athletic type, and makes an excellent alternative to the ball games of English schools. A certain amount of time is given to agricultural work. When the children are away from the bush enclosure, they use a whistle as they go about the district to warn off any women who may happen to be on the roads. Women, hearing the whistle, take great pains to avoid them. They know that espionage, even if not found out, would cause them terrible sickness. There is good reason to know that. The women, however, have their revenge. They have their own society, asserting their rights and fulfilling similar functions for women. Many men have suffered by contact with their medicine. But the Poro children go with safety all over the chiefdom and do their work unseen by the uninitiated. In a changing country, where European influence is spreading rapidly, the efficiency of these societies gives food for thought.

No one can doubt that these courses of training include much which



is of practical and moral value. The native rulers, speaking with a sense of responsibility, always tell us this. Although not embodied in written books of authority, the ethical and legal codes of the primitive are highly developed. It is in the Poro that the youth becomes acquainted with them. He is taken from his parents, poor peasants too busy with their farms to tell him much, and placed under the care of experienced guides. Education imparted in such a manner is calculated to make a deep impression on the pupil. The effect of isolation, of nervous reaction to the rites and continual aesthetic excitement induced by the dance cannot be overrated. The initiate never forgets what he has experienced, and the voice of the spirit holds him, whenever it is heard. It is not like a course of instruction which ends. It is more like a religion, conferring on the primitive much that religion implies.

In it the young initiate is caught up in a system which prepares him for tribesmanship, and reveals its implications as he grows. An elaborate ritual, varying according to local or hereditary usage, ensures his status, and commits him, not only to the faithful observance of domestic duties, but to a career of public usefulness. It forms a bridge over which a way lies from the narrow, confined atmosphere of family life to the free service of the community. Rooted in the village life, these associations provide a field for mental expansion. Their secrets are tribal traditions ; they are a repository of knowledge in the art of living gained in long centuries of tribal experience and imparted in this way by the elders to their successors. Their sessions in the forest are both a discipline and an occasion of festivity. The individual, the callow village boy, is taught team-work. He learns that "manners maketh man". The intense, but narrow, loyalty to kindred becomes absorbed in devotion to the interests of a society which traverses all local divisions. Primitive man, says Westermarck, has the same moral concepts as civilized man, but his sphere of obligation is narrow. It is so : but in his strong tendency to organize himself in societies he reveals the impulse to a wider outlook.

The political functions of the Poro are a development from its social history. Like similar associations elsewhere, it embodies a number of primitive institutions which have been blended and rationalized in the course of its long history. In recent times the political function has been prominent. During the nineteenth century it was the Poro which made war and made peace. Its power and extended field rendered possible in times of strife a certain measure of intertribal control. Local traditions bear constant witness to the pacifying influence. When, again, it had been agreed that a war was necessary to restrain some aggressor, the Poro sent its messenger through the country and old enemies would unite for a common end. So, finally, in the supreme war, when it was decided that the white man must be expelled from the land, it was the "one-word Poro" which started the well-concerted moves of the rising of 1898. Tribes over a large area and of different speech and customs worked with unanimity.

In civil life its function in relation to the political authority is well defined. Each section of the country is ruled by a paramount chief. Government recognition has strengthened this office. But the power of the Poro remains unabated. It works as a college of elders with well understood functions, and at the election of a chief its influence is paramount. Doubtless its procedure has undergone modification since white men first began to observe it three hundred years ago, but its activities are still patent to everyone. It has been handled with genius by our political officers. It is the source of native law, and the people accept its ordinances with a submission which is seldom accorded to Government regulations. It makes rules for the proper conduct of agriculture and industry. The use of the oil palm tree, fishing grounds, and growing crops, the regulation of farm-marks and boundaries, even sanitation comes under its surveillance. This side of its work has usually been treated with sympathy by the Government. It has led at times to misunderstanding. The oil palm is a great source of wealth. The tree bears during a long season, and at times, when the price of the products are good, people are apt to reap the harvest of the trees to the neglect of their proper farm work, so essential to the food supply. The Poro, however, is actually able to prevent such abuses by putting a mark on the palm bush. These marks are universally respected.

When the young initiates have reached the end of their training, there is a season of festivity. The boys are dressed up in a manner which usually suggests a survival from the days when European material was not known. They wear a kind of net-work tunic of twisted cotton, and are ornamented with brightly coloured headkerchiefs and silver trinkets. Their skins are glistening with oil. Thus adorned, they tour the villages and give dancing displays. Everywhere they are received with great hospitality and rejoicing.

The future of societies conducted with so much secrecy under the changing conditions of British rule is a very difficult question. Codrington, discussing the parallel institutions of Melanesia, remarks that in spite of the conversion of the islanders to Christianity, it was not considered by the missionaries that dissolution would be desirable, even if practicable. The same might be said of the Poro. It cannot be dispensed with. And as long as there is a homogeneous population in the agricultural districts, it will continue to flourish. Even in great towns with a very mixed population, it has shown a tenacious vitality, and, with the migration of the Mendi tribe to other colonies, the Poro has followed. Students of the subject will recall cases where similar societies have declined with the spread of new influences. They become magical fraternities without much political significance. Illustrations of such fraternities are not wanting in West Africa. But the Poro is not one of them. Under the British its prestige has not diminished. Gradual modification is to be expected and desired; but dissolution would deprive the people of a most valuable instrument of government.

# A PSYCHO-ANALYTIC APPROACH TO THE INTERPRETATION OF GROUP PHENOMENA

By MELITTA SCHMIDEBERG

(PART 2)

IT IS GENERALLY assumed that we read the newspapers in order to keep ourselves abreast of the important events of the time. But if that were really so, it would be hard to explain why so much space in them is given over to matters of relatively trivial significance. But in spite of all this, most of us enjoy reading the newspapers. We derive a certain satisfaction from finding that other people are just as unhappy or still more unhappy than ourselves. Newspaper reports present the reader with opportunities for rationalizing anxieties which he would not care to admit even to himself. Wealthy people have no need to fear hunger, but they find a rational basis for their irrational starvation anxieties when they allow themselves to be perturbed by famine conditions in China. Fear of poverty may express itself in anxiety concerning the soundness of America's financial policy, fears of mutilation and injury may find a displaced outlet in reading reports of atrocities committed in the Spanish civil war or lamenting the evil fate which has descended upon one's "mutilated" Fatherland. Anyone who entertains disagreeable thoughts which he wishes to silence, who fears that his son may turn against him, or he himself be involved in a violent dispute with his employer, may become preoccupied with fears that another revolution is brewing in Portugal.

Many patients spend the best part of the analytic session describing and discussing what they have read in the newspapers. The items of news selected and the accompanying comments and affects reflect their own family conflicts. For one patient, tension between Italy and Abyssinia will represent strained relations between his parents, and his fear that his own country may become involved correspond to a fear lest he himself be drawn into their disputes; but again Italy may symbolize an elder brother who would deprive the younger child of his possessions, or a father who feels obliged to "civilize" (educate) "backward" Abyssinia, while yet another patient will react to the "rape" of Abyssinia.

The newspaper enables us not only to rationalize our anxieties, but also to mitigate them; we learn that sick people get well again, that all accidents do not end fatally, that people are saved from starvation, that no revolution took place after all or that it was not so savage as had been

feared. And if I said that we derive satisfaction from reading about human suffering, it is only fair to add that we are also anxious that things should improve, that bad governments should make way for better ones, that wars and accidents should be prevented, and poverty, distress, and unemployment abolished. We should like to make amends for our primitive sadistic impulses by helping the sick and the poor, and we feel reassured when we read that others have translated these kindly impulses into action on our behalf. This saves us the trouble of having to do anything ourselves or of feeling guilty over our inaction.

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Internal conflict is largely determined by the violent contradictions which exist between various parts of the mind and can be reduced by projecting these into the external world. It comes as a relief when we can free ourselves from the torment of self-reproach by attacking certain individuals who personify our "evil" tendencies.

I believe that crime is of great psychological benefit to society. This may sound absurd, for we know very well that society does its level best to suppress it. But who would there be left to fight if there were no longer any criminals? We may ask in all seriousness how respectable citizens would dispose of the aggression which they now discharge against criminals if punishment were suddenly abolished. Would they become criminals themselves to satisfy their sadism? Would the likelihood of a revolution or war breaking out become greater? Or would we be confronted with an increase in the incidence of neurotic disorders and in the number of accidents on the road?

As I explained earlier, we all have a tendency to find a rational basis for our anxieties. As adults we no longer believe in the existence of the Devil or the "bogy-man"; robbers and murderers, however, do exist. Our fear of dangerous and malignant spirits is readily displaced from the creatures of our phantasy on to real criminals. This anxiety which is both rational and irrational is appeased by campaigns against crime. Each sentence of death or imprisonment relieves our anxiety, at any rate for the moment.

There is a part of our minds which is sadistic and criminal; the crimes people commit reflect our own unconscious sadistic phantasies. An important source of our mental conflicts is to be found in our struggle with this sadistic and criminal ego. Our task becomes lighter when we can attack, punish, or reform actual criminals. Thus the criminal becomes a scapegoat for ourselves. The honest citizen can more easily overcome the temptation to steal when he knows that he will be punished if he does: the law supports his conscience. Our penal provisions are really needed, not so much for the criminal himself, as for his non-criminal fellow-citizens. If all laws were abolished it may

be that some of us who now lead respectable lives would become wrong-doers. With most people, however, this is not what would happen: their consciences would forbid it. But they would have a harder task dealing with their asocial tendencies if they could no longer look to the law for support, and the increased effort so demanded of them might easily destroy their mental adjustments and give rise to neuroses and other difficulties. Our attitude to criminals will very largely coincide with that we adopt towards the criminal part of our own ego. A man who is severe with himself will also be severe in his condemnation of criminals; people who are more tolerant of their primitive impulses will possess understanding for criminals too. It has often been said that society has a heavy share in the responsibility for crime. I cannot here discuss how far this criticism is justified. But if it is true to say that the maintenance of a criminal class has an important mental function to fulfil for us all, we may be sure that our best intentions and most active efforts to abolish crime will be impeded or frustrated by our unconscious needs. Throughout the ages self-sacrificing men have striven to remedy social evils and to relieve distress, but their efforts have been crowned with relatively little success. The customary explanation which attributes unsatisfactory social conditions to human stupidity and selfishness—whether of a class or a few individuals—overlooks the operation of unconscious factors. Society proceeds after the manner of certain neurotics who, in spite of great conscious efforts to succeed, unconsciously do everything in their power to secure unhappiness. It would be important to investigate in detail the unconscious factors obstructing social progress.

It is only natural that we should find wars and revolutions more interesting than ordinary everyday occurrences, but it does not follow in the least that a study of these dramatic events is more fruitful from a scientific point of view. It was a signal service that psycho-analysis performed when it aroused our interest in such trivial phenomena as dreams and errors, which science had always treated with neglect and contempt, and proved that an understanding of such everyday matters as reactions to food and clothes, or minor habits connected with going to bed and getting up, was indispensable for any true appreciation of mental disorders. Similarly a war or revolution cannot be studied as an isolated phenomenon; the tendencies which there break through in massive and dramatic forms (first and foremost sadism and masochism, and resistance to sadism) are expressed in a less striking fashion in hunting, anti-vivisection movements, crime, organized detection, dangerous driving, failure to prevent mining disasters, newspaper campaigns, shooting booths, etc. (So that it is not very intelligent of pacifists to try to suppress hunting, for instance.)

But we need to study ordinary everyday people as well as trifling everyday experiences. Outstanding events are very largely determined

by the reactions of those who apparently have no say in them. These people have it in their power to decide whether to participate in a movement (military or political) or to repudiate it. Those who follow the crime-reports every morning with interest, indignation, or regret bear a share of the responsibility for the existence of crime in our midst.

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There is yet another way in which we can learn from psycho-analytic methods. Psycho-analysis first sought to arrive at an understanding of specific symptoms, but in the course of its development we found that it was essential to uncover the connections between the symptoms in question and other symptoms and character-traits and to investigate the patient's total personality and development. Moreover, it became clear that the importance of the factors precipitating a neurosis was often exaggerated. Sometimes it was simply a case of the last straw which breaks the camel's back ; or again, the illness had already a long history behind it and had merely changed its form when it appeared to have broken out for the first time. Most often the precipitating factors were not really so important at all, but the patient's desire to find a rational explanation or justification of his neurosis had led him to emphasize certain unpleasant experiences.

If we proceed now to apply these discoveries to the field of group-psychology, we are forced to the conclusion that a significant event, such as a revolution, does not explain itself, and what is more, cannot be adequately accounted for simply by reference to its immediate causes. In order to arrive at a true understanding of it we must know what situations have brought it about and trace these back in turn to their origins. We should have to acquaint ourselves with the psychology both of its adherents and its enemies as well as of those who took no active part in it but allowed events to take their course. A close knowledge of its outstanding personalities and their relations to one another would certainly be valuable. It would be necessary to study the interaction of purely economic factors and purely psychological ones such as love, hate, confidence, etc. A question worth considering would be why these affects could only be satisfied in the violent way in which they were and not, for instance, in cultural achievements. We see, then, that it is not enough to study the economic conditions and political situation of the time ; it is equally necessary to consider its ideology, religion, morality, its economic and cultural achievements as well as the educational system and general living conditions which prevailed. Not only because these things affect, and are themselves affected by, the political and economic situation, but also because certain instinctual impulses and affects are capable of being gratified in more ways than one. It is necessary to understand all the modes of self-expression and strivings of a nation in order to be able to assess correctly the significance of a given

event. Thus it would be relevant to inquire why the revolution did not take place earlier than it did or, in other words, how the difficulties which culminated in revolution had been dealt with before the outbreak. It would also be important to explain why, let us say, unfavourable economic conditions were not remedied earlier. Further, we should have to observe how far particular events and reactions appeared to be characteristic of a given period or country, and describe and analyse the "Zeitgeist" as well as the national character of a people. For practical reasons so comprehensive an investigation would rarely be possible but, ideally speaking, one would have to reckon with all these and yet other factors and their interplay.

We must investigate the unconscious forces that determine the prevailing psychological attitudes of a society and leave their mark on its economic situation. But it is not enough merely to assert that "unconscious factors", "sexual impulses", or "sadistic tendencies" are at work, that an individual is driven by love, hate, anxiety, or guilt. We believe that everyone has these impulses, just as everyone has bones and muscles. Yet no anatomist would rest content with the perfectly valid proposition that a man has bones and muscles; he would assuredly wish to acquire a detailed knowledge of the number, shape, and structure of the separate bones and muscles, of their mutual relations and functions and of the disorders affecting these. He would also inquire what other organs enter into the composition of the human body. Similarly, it is not very helpful to declare that a revolution is caused by "sadism" or the "Oedipus complex"; one should also be able to say what factors were responsible for a sadistic reaction on the occasion in question. It might then appear that certain frustrations due to economic factors had stimulated anxiety and hatred and that there was no alternative way in which this anxiety could have been allayed because certain other events had undermined confidence in the existing government. Consequently fear had intensified hatred to a point where it had to be discharged in a revolutionary upheaval.

I have tried in this paper to show that rational activities and attitudes are bound up with irrational elements and that the instinct of self-preservation is fused with libidinal impulses. Accordingly, it is a mistake to draw a simple contrast between "psychological" and "economic" motives. Economic conditions in our society have for the most part been created by human beings and are therefore necessarily bound up with their psychology. Economic measures and conditions such as unemployment will always produce certain psychological effects. Economists<sup>1</sup> have pointed out that one and the same economic measure (e.g. inflation) will have very different effects, both psychological and

<sup>1</sup> Myrdal, *Beitrage zur Geldtheorie*, Berlin, 1932; Hicks, "Suggestions for a Simplification of the Theory of Money," *Economica*, 1935; Balogh, "An Essay into Cheap Money" (Lecture delivered at the London School of Economics)

economic, according to whether the prevailing mood is one of confidence or suspicion ; in other words, its effects will depend very largely on the psychological situation. While confidence predominates, even very severe frustrations can be borne. The factor of frustration is not in itself sufficient to explain a revolution, but only when it is taken in conjunction with the given psychological situation.

I have had to deal with the various problems mentioned in this paper in a somewhat perfunctory manner, but I hope I have said enough to demonstrate the importance of psycho-analytic researches for sociological problems. The discoveries we have made in studying individuals must constitute the foundation for any system of group-psychology, but this does not mean that they can simply be applied in this field in a direct and unmodified form. They will have to be adapted to the specific problems of group-psychology and combined with other methods of investigation ; it will be for the future to evolve the appropriate technique.

*(Translated by H. Mayor)*



# GUILHEM DE CABESTANH

## (THE KNIGHT OF THE EATEN HEART)

By KENNETH WESTON

(ONE DAY TOWARDS the close of the eleventh century Guilhem, seventh Count of Poitiers and ninth Duke of Aquitaine, sang to the knights of his court what is for us the first lyric poem in any modern language. There were singers before him—troubadours who moved from court to court in the gay region that stretched over the southern part of France and across the Pyrenees, inaccurately but most simply called Provence. Of these no songs have survived. Those coming after Guilhem sang many good songs, until Pope Innocent III saw fit to order the amazing display of violence and cruelty *ad maiorem dei gloriam* known as the Albigensian Crusade. This brought about the destruction of the whole social system in which the troubadours could flourish. Many of these songs were preserved. They have become largely a playground for philologists ; they have also been used as proof “ of the misery as well as the guilt attending an improper indulgence of the mind in early life ”. The skill and sensibility they show, and the interest to be found in the ways of life they reflect, have received little publicity.

The social status of the singers ranged from the most high to the most low ; talent won food and shelter, and no little glory. Many a poor knight found it simpler to sing at the courts of others than to endeavour to keep up his own. Of such was Guilhem de Cabestanh whose story follows. This was written when the songs came to be collected in the early part of the thirteenth century, by men who had probably been troubadours themselves and had known the court life at its best. On the background of this knowledge they built up these biographies with information taken from the poems themselves and any relevant stories they knew. Only the insensitive will raise questions concerning strict historical veracity.)

My lord Raimon de Rossillion was a valiant baron, as you know, and had as his wife my lady Margarida, the loveliest lady that man knew at that time, and the most endowed with all good qualities and all virtues and all courtesy.

It chanced that Guilhem de Cabestanh, who was the son of a poor knight of Castle Cabestanh, came to the court of my lord Raimon de Rossillion, and presented himself to him, if it should please him that he became vassal in his court. My lord Raimon, seeing that he was goodly and handsome and of good part, said that he was welcome and that he might dwell at his court. Thus he dwelt with him and knew to bear himself so nobly that he was beloved by high and low. And he knew so to advance himself that my lord Raimon willed that he became page to my lady Margarida his wife ; and it was done. Then Guilhem

strove to achieve greater worth in both deed and word. But as befalls with Love, it chanced that Love assailed my lady Margarida with his assault and warmed her thoughts. So much did the manner of Guilhem please her and his words and semblance, that she could not hold herself one day from saying to him :

"Tell me, Guilhem, if a lady made you semblance of love, would you dare to love her ?"

Guilhem, who comprehended, answered her quite frankly :

"If I, my lady, did but know the semblance to be true."

"By St. Johan," said the lady, "you have answered well and as a man of worth ; but now I would prove you, whether you can know and tell of semblances which is true and which is not."

When Guilhem heard these words, he answered her :

"My lady, be it as you please."

And he began to ponder, and at once Love assailed him strongly, and the thoughts that Love sends to his own entered his heart to its depths. And from that time he was a servant of Love and began to make couplets, charming and gay, and dances and songs pleasant to sing. To all they were pleasing, but more to her for whom he sang. And Love which grants his servants recompense when they chance to please him, wished to pay him the reward of his services. He comes assailing the lady so grievously with cares and dreams of love that neither day nor night can she rest, for thought of the valour and prowess that was set and lodged in lord Guilhem so abundantly.

A day came when the lady took Guilhem and said :

"Guilhem, now tell me, have you yet seen of my semblances whether they be true or lying ?"

Guilhem answered :

"Lady, as God may help me, from the hour that I was your servant, no thought could come into my heart but that you were the best ever born, and the most true in word and semblance. So I believe and will believe all my life."

And the lady answered :

"Guilhem, I tell you, with God's help, you shall never be deceived by me, and your thoughts shall not be in vain."

And she took his arms and gently kissed him in the chamber where they sat together ; and they began their loving.

And it was not long before the gossips whom God hates began to speak of their love and came to speculate upon it through the songs that Guilhem made. So they went speaking up and down, until it came to the ears of my lord Raimon. Then he learnt it ill and was greatly angered, for that it befell him to lose the companion that he loved so much, and more for the shame of his wife.

A day came when Guilhem had gone hawking with only an esquire. And my lord Raimon questioned where he was, and a servant told him

that he had gone hawking, and he that knew said to him : " In such and such a place."

At once he went and armed himself with concealed arms and had his horse brought and made his way all alone towards that part whither Guilhem had gone. He rode so far that he found him. When Guilhem saw that he came, he gave himself to wonder, and at once troubled thoughts came to him. And he went to meet him and said :

" My lord, may your coming be good. How are you thus alone ? "

My lord Raimon answered :

" Guilhem, for that I come seeking sport with you. And have you caught nothing ? "

" Scarcely anything at all, my lord, for I have found little, and as you know, the proverb says : ' He who finds little can scarce catch anything.' "

" Let us now quit this talk," said my lord Raimon, " but tell me truly, through the faith you owe me, all that I please to ask you."

" By God, my lord," said Guilhem, " if it be a thing to tell, well will I tell it you."

" I wish that you offer me no excuses," said my lord Raimon, " but tell me all fully that which I ask you."

" My lord, since it pleases you, question me," said Guilhem, " and I will tell the truth."

And my lord Raimon said :

" Guilhem, as you value God and Faith, have you a lady for whom you sing, and for whom Love torments you ? "

Guilhem answered :

" My lord, and how should I sing, if Love did not torment me ? Know truly, my lord, that Love has me wholly in his power."

Raimon replied :

" I am well willing to believe it, for otherwise you could not sing so nobly ; but I would know, if it please you, tell me, who is your lady ? "

" Ai ! by God, my lord," said Guilhem, " beware what you ask me ; there are reasons why one must not reveal one's love. You question me that of which, as you know, Lord Bernart del Ventadorn said :

In one thing my reason serves me ;  
no man of my joy has asked me ;  
and to lie to him I would not,  
for in that I see no wisdom.  
But 'tis childishness and folly  
that the one whom love treats kindly  
should bare his heart to any other man,  
if it be worthless and of no avail."

My lord Raimon answered :

" I promise you I will aid you in my power."

So much could Raimon promise him, that Guilhem said :

" My lord, know thus that I love the sister of lady Margarida, your

wife, and think to have of her requital of my love. Now that you know this, I beg of you that you aid me, or at least afford me no harm for it."

"Take hand and pledge," said Raimon, "for I swear to you and promise you that I will aid you with all my power."

And thus he pledged him. And when he had pledged him, Raimon said :

"I would that we go thither, for it is near this place."

"By God, I beg of you," said Guilhem.

And thus they took their way to the castle of Liet. And when they were at the castle, they were well received by Lord Robert de Tarascon, who was husband of my lady Agnes, the sister of my lady Margarida, and by my lady Agnes also.

And my lord Raimon took my lady Agnes by the hand and led her into a chamber, and they sat down upon the bed. And my lord Raimon said :

"Now tell me, sister, by the faith you owe me, do you love with passion?"

And she said :

"Yes, my lord."

"And whom?" he asked.

"This I can scarcely tell you."

And why should I tell you more? In the end he besought her so much that she said she loved Guilhem de Cabestanh. This she said for that she saw Guilhem sad and miserable; and she knew well how he loved her sister; so she feared lest Raimon had ill thoughts for Guilhem. And from this Raimon had great cheer.

This tale the lady told her husband, and her husband replied that she had done well, and gave her word that she might do or say all that was a means to Guilhem's escape. And the lady did it well, for she called Guilhem into her chamber all alone, and remained with him, so that Raimon thought that he must have had with her the delights of love. And all this pleased him, and he began to think that that which had been said of him was not true.

And what needs it saying? The lady and Guilhem came from the chamber, and supper was prepared, and they had supper with great cheer. And after supper, the lady had the beds of both of them made ready before the door of her chamber, and so they were, in one semblance and another, the lady and Guilhem, that Raimon believed that Guilhem lay with her.

And on the morrow they dined at the castle with great cheer; and after dinner they left with good speeding, and came to Rossillion. And as soon as Raimon was able, he left Guilhem and went from him to his wife and told her what he had seen of Guilhem and her sister. For which the lady had great sadness all night.

And on the morrow she sent for Guilhem, and received him ill, and

called him false and a traitor. And Guilhem besought her mercy, as a man who had no fault in that of which she accused him. And he told her all that had passed, word by word. And the lady sent for her sister and through her knew well that Guilhem was without fault. And for this the lady told him and commanded him that he should make a song in which he showed that he loved no other lady but her. So he made the song that said :

Sweet reveries  
 that often love affords,  
 Lady, of you  
 inspire this many a verse.  
 Dreaming I see  
 your body proud and dear  
 that I desire  
 far more than I reveal.  
 And though I seem disloyal  
 for you, I fail you not,  
 for ever unto you  
 I kneel with true well-wishing.  
 Lady in whom shines beauty,  
 forgetful of myself  
 I pay you thanks and praise.

And when Raimon de Rossillion heard the song that Guilhem had made of his wife, he had him come to parley with him outside the castle, and struck off his head and put it in a game-bag, and tore the heart from his body and put it with the head. And he went back to the castle and had the heart roasted and carried to his wife at table, and had her eat it in ignorance. And when she had eaten it, Raimon rose and told his wife that that which she had eaten was the heart of lord Guilhem de Cabestanh ; and he showed her the head, and asked her if it had been good to eat. And she heard this that he asked her, and saw and knew the head of lord Guilhem. She answered that it had been so good and tasty that never again would she eat or drink other, nor take the savour from her mouth that the heart of lord Guilhem had left there. And Raimon ran at her with his sword. And she fled to the door of a balcony and let herself fall below and broke her neck.

This ill deed was known throughout all Cataloigna and through all the lands of the king of Aragon, and by king Anfos and by all the barons of the countries. Great sadness there was and great mourning for the death of lord Guilhem and of the lady whom so outrageously had lord Raimon killed. And there gathered the parents of lord Guilhem and of the lady, and all the gallant knights of that country, and all who were lovers, and they made war on Raimon with blood and fire. And king Anfos of Aragon came to that country, when he knew of the death of the lady and of the knight ; and he took Raimon and destroyed his castles and lands ; and he had Guilhem and the lady set in a tomb before the door

of the church at Perpignac, a town which is in the plain of Rossillion and of Sardagna, the which town is of the king of Aragon.

And there was a time when all the knights of Rossillion and of Sardagna and of Cofolen and of Riuples and of Peiralaida and of Narbones observed their anniversary each year ; and all true lovers and their loves prayed to God for their souls.

And the king of Aragon seized Raimon and took from him his heritage and had him die in prison ; and he gave all his possessions to the parents of lord Guilhem and to the parents of the lady who had died for him.

And the town in which Guilhem and the lady were buried is called Perpignac.

*(Translated from the thirteenth-century Provençal by the author)*

# ON A STORY BY TCHEKOV

By SEÁN O'FAOLÁIN

IT IS A pleasure to see the personality of a writer behind his work. Whether it be a pleasing or an unlikeable personality does not really matter : as Balzac said, "the man whose action habitually bears the stamp of his mind is a genius." But to write about such writers is difficult, because personality is an elusive thing : and with Tchekov, whose personality is so extraordinarily complex, to write of his work is virtually impossible unless one is content to adopt a form of impressionism in description. And that is to do no more than hold up to his mind a battered mirror. Certainly nobody can define him. Can one define magic ? Can one analyse poetry ? Can one hope to pigeon-hole a writer who contains in his work every known form of writing—Realism, Naturalism, Impressionism, Romance, Subjectivity ? Really an essay on Tchekov should consist of a single sentence written on the fly-leaf of one of his books.—He is the poet of the reality of the unique human heart for which the moment is Eternity and the place is Everywhere.

Still—one tries. One tries because one cannot evade his influence, and because he *is* complex : if he were simple one would not fear to misunderstand him.

He is so easily misunderstood. I took up a little while ago his early story *Verotchka*, one of his first serious stories. (He began to write as the "funny man" of the cheap Moscow comics.) I had not re-read that story for years and I had the idea that it was just a trifling piece of romanticism. Ognev, I had remembered, had come to the country for a few months and made there the acquaintance of an old man and his daughter, Vera ; now he is leaving them, and as he walks across the moonlit fields where the mist lies in coils over the grass, he is filled with fine but melancholy sentiments : suddenly Vera meets him and delays his departure, and Ognev drools on a little more about his sad heart, and how they may not meet again for years. To his dismay, Vera, overcome by emotion, declares her love for him—he need not go, he need not be sad, he need not fear they will never meet again ; but Ognev sighs and throws up his hands and confesses that he does not love her in the least, and so he goes on his way, sorrowing. The old tune, I said to myself as I prepared to re-read it—"How sad life is, my brother ! How sad and how beautiful !" —the usual Russian sentimentalism.

But the story is not at all like that, and to read it again was a shock of delight—and dismay. For Tchekov sees these two people ironically, whereas I, doubtless in my romantic youth, took it all in good earnest. Tchekov sees these two characters as the most common product of the Russian 'sixties, sketches them as a doctor might sketch the neurosis of a

patient, and presents them to us with a little smile, so fleeting that one wonders if he did smile. From that story Tchekov went on to greater strength, and to a deeper feeling of life, but as I now follow him through that great ten years of his middle period, which I should put between 1888 and 1898, I feel that in that early story everything that he was to do—even the lovely in-gathering of all his emotions, as to a full-tide, of *The Three Sisters*, or *The Cherry Orchard*, is implicit in *Verotchka*. It is true that he wrote it just as he came out of the poverty and hurry of his student days and before he had time to brood over his experiences or his conclusions; that the irony of it is youth-deep rather than man-deep; that the subject is hardly significant and is somewhat local: but the detachment is entirely adequate and the technique though not yet perfect (a little too loose, too easily descriptive) is entirely Tchekovian. I think one could construct his personality and his method out of that one tale.

## II

For one thing, was he not always saying how much he hated violence and sham in all its aspects? We find him saying so over and over again in his letters and his diaries.

I detect them (he says in one letter) in religion, in science, in the younger generation. . . . I look upon labels and trade-marks as prejudices. My Holy of Holies is the human body, health, mind, talent, inspiration, love, and the most absolute freedom—freedom from violence and falsehood in whatever form they may be manifested.

And it is a fact that a great number of his stories are sub-audible comments on sham, violence, falsehood; and that in his honest disgust with these things, and in his honest loyalty to everybody who was trying to combat these he created types of these things and their opposites. Common types with him are the cruel and stupid father, or the selfish and petty-minded husband, or the stupid bully, the interfering crank, the ignorant fellow who thinks he knows everything, the lazy philosophizing intellectual, the neurotic woman, the sentimentalist (as in *Verotchka*). You will find such types as these in *The Man in a Case* (v), *The Head of the Family* (iii), *The Husband* (iii), *An Upheaval* (iii), *At a Country House* (viii), *Difficult People* (v), *The Princess* (ii): and their opposites in *A Doctor's Visit* (iii), *The Grasshopper* (v), *The Nightmare* (vii).<sup>1</sup> They are frequently opposed to one another and their opposition is his comment.

This makes one feel, at once, that Tchekov is not a Romantic writer. The Romantic is always sublimating reality according to his own desires, escaping from what he dislikes, exploiting himself, often deceiving himself. There is too much manliness in Tchekov, the freed-serf's son who had early experienced the harshness of life, for that type

<sup>1</sup> References are to the Collected Edition: Chatto & Windus. 1916-1921. Trans. by Constance Garnett



of self-deception. He had seen beauty and goodness too often frustrated in that way, and had too much love for "personal freedom" (by which he meant freedom from all phobias) to be deluded into any form of escapism.

This, in turn, reminds us of another quality in his work, which sometimes leads his imitators to imitate him only in part—on his purely Naturalistic side: what one might call his hard, objective, almost scientific, way of looking at the world about him, normal or abnormal. He was, like all the greatest writers before him (these are almost his own words) a great believer in normality. "I depict life," he said, in effect, "and show how it departs from the normal. I do not know and nobody knows what the norm is. We know what an honourable act is, but we do not know what Honour is. But I take the framework that has been used by greater men than me, and it is freedom from violence, from sham, from lies, from evil, from passions . . . and so on." He gave definite testimony, too, to the help he got from his profession as doctor. He took great pains to correct the details of all such things as mental or physical diseases where they occurred in his stories. A story like *Verotchka* is the story of a cold observer. He once said: "You must never write until you are completely calm."

But—and *Verotchka* illustrates, indeed suggests, this—it is a peculiar kind of objectivity. He presents things to us always stripped, it is true, of all literary and romantic associations, naked and real figures, seen with absolute clarity, but they are always dressed in light—the light of his own moted, milky mood, the light of his pity, the light of his poetry. He would thus fuse himself completely with his characters until he and they were one, while at the same time withdrawing himself from their own self-importance, giving to them no more of his emotional being than was, we feel, exquisitely proportioned to the cause. Every writer does this to a degree—few, perhaps none, to the amazing degree of mercy tempered by justice, sympathy ordered by understanding, love restrained by irony, irony melted by poetry, poetry affirmed by reality, that we see in Tchekov. I know no writer who shows such a lovely sanity as he, such warmth of wisdom, such balance of heart and brain. His restraint was immense because his emotions were powerful, his heart so kind. So, he who so detested shams, can, in *Verotchka* (or in *Iomitch* (iii); or *The Man in a Case* (v), write of shams with complete sympathy and show by no more than the merest little mow of a smile what he really thinks, as a man, of such people. For, in him, though artist and man are inseparable, though all his art is the affirmation of his personality, though his life and his art are, as it were, as much one as the grape and its juice, he will never, as an artist, express his opinion by anything more obvious than a gentle irony.

Opinions? He had many—as a doctor, as a Russian, as a man-of-the-world. Perhaps his abiding opinion was that of the born optimist—

"Russia will have a Constitution in ten years time"; "In a hundred years from now the whole world will be a flowering garden." And, like every optimist, he was downcast by the spectacle of the frustration of beauty, and strength, and health around him. That optimism, and its obverse, informs much of his work. You read a story of his and you feel the pleasure of having read a work of art, lovely or comical or tragic. In a happy mood you close the book. And then, suddenly, you hear a kind of whispering echo from out of its pages, saying, "The world is sick." It is only an echo, for in no story that he ever wrote, no play, is it more than the rustle of a subterranean stream of idea. He makes you hear it, nevertheless, and he does this, simply by leading his characters towards moments of self-revelation, self-confession, like little windows out of their own egotistical preoccupation with the trivial round of life through which they glimpse for a second the folly or the tragedy of their days, and the mystery of a far wider orbit of life than they have ever seen before, or may ever glimpse again. It is so in *Verotchka*, where Ognev as he leaves Vera thinks that a part of his youth is for ever gone with her.

That could not be done by a writer who did not himself possess an attitude to life. And, as a result, it is never done by writers of the Naturalist school, for they dislike comment and profess to have no opinions: for them, fiction is a science and deals with facts, the "exact anatomy of life", "the human document"; they evaded generalizations, were concerned with the machinery of the mind, not with its results, avoided "types" (that would in itself be a form of comment), and so wrote, always, in a spirit of inconsequentiality and pessimism. Tchekov had a definite attitude and what is essentially worth noting is that he was, therefore, not merely penetrating (many men have been as penetrating) but wise with a comprehensiveness that defies all question. He left nothing out.

But, no!—that is too sweeping. He pays the price of comprehensiveness—lack of dramatic power. For if you will keep on commenting on the foolishness of your characters, a better word is the "egoism" of your characters (it is Edward Garnett's word in his essay on Tchekov in *Friday Nights*) by means of situations which reveal themselves to themselves, you inevitably prevent them from functioning freely, which is to say dramatically. Tchekov's characters are never free. They are always caught in the gauze of his own mood that they invoke in him, in the atmosphere of place that he evokes in us, in the diseased circumstances of their lives of which he always makes us fully aware. Balzac's people, on the contrary, stride through his books in complete freedom of their own wills, rebelling or being defeated, but never rebelling against their internal enemies or being defeated by them, never being revealed to themselves to such a degree that they pause for more than an instant in their headlong way. Balzac will, therefore, comment on them

from the outside, since they never will comment much on themselves, for if Eugène de Rastignac writes home for 1,500 francs, gets it, weeps over his little sisters whose savings he is taking from them, and declares that he is a scoundrel—he will thereupon order a new suit of clothes with the money, and think no more about it as he rushes to his fate. Had it been a Tchekov character, he would either not have written, or had he taken the money, he would have dug a drill into the very depths of his heart so that whatever he did after would be of no account beside the brutality of that moment of self-revelation. This is not, however, a limitation in Tchekov. It is merely his method: the method of *Verotchka*.

So that when we come to those last five years in his life, the period of the great plays, so filled of atmosphere, so gentle of irony, so tender of feeling, every character is like an insect in the symphony of a summer's day that will never end, and he, poring lovingly over them like God the Father, is unwilling that they should ever stir—unwilling that the grasshopper should leap, or the bee leave the hare-bell, or the dragon-fly cease hovering. In these plays life goes on and on, which is to say that like a mill-wheel it goes nowhere. These plays are the perfection of his lyric mood, the logical conclusion of his disbelief in the significance of dramatic action. Their acceptance of the inevitability of life is, indeed, removed only from despair by their loving-kindness, their tenderness as poetic conceptions of life and character.

It is his poetry that marks him out from all other writers, as it is his judgment and his merciless diagnosis that marks him off from all poets. That is the unique blend of qualities in him, baffling all definitions, containing so much that no phrase suffices to describe him with precision. All that one knows, with certainty, is that he suggests more than he says, that everything he wrote is fused into a unity by a mood of poetic intuition, and that everything he wrote is informed by a very definite personality controlled by a very common-sense mind. That balanced unity in Tchekov is an endless delight—experience, thought, personality, art, life and work all become one so that you can no more say he is always the artist than you can say that he is always the doctor. He was, quite simply, always Anton Tchekov. There are many writers, Balzac especially, whom one would give a good deal to have known. There is no need to wish that of Tchekov. To read him is to know him—to know, it may be, more than one might have known had one met him, for he was very silent, like all men whose essential world is within.

### III

These are rather the characteristics of Tchekov the man, working on his stories, than the characteristics of Tchekov the craftsman directly fashioning them. As for that—his technique—it is, again, his poetry that

gives his method its peculiar quality, and *Verotchka* will illustrate this ; for poetry seeks for the perfume or essence of things, and in his technique Tchekov is, at his best, always more interested in the perfume of reality than in its literal appearance.

There is a story of his called *Mire*, which I should not call a typically Tchekovian story ; compare its crudely Naturalistic method with the method of *Verotchka*. Both are early stories. In *Mire* he wishes to describe a lieutenant and an intriguing Jewess whose house he visits.

The lieutenant sprang gaily out of his saddle, handed over his horse to a man who ran up, and stroking with his finger his delicate black moustache went in at the front door. On the top step of the old but light and softly carpeted stair-case he was met by a maid-servant with a haughty but not very youthful face. . . . Exactly opposite the entrance, he saw, sitting in a big low chair, such as old men use, a woman in an expensive Chinese dressing-gown, with her head wrapped-up, leaning back on a pillow. Nothing could be seen behind the woollen shawl in which she was muffled but a pale, long, pointed, somewhat aquiline nose, and one large dark eye. Her ample dressing-gown concealed her figure, but judging from her beautiful hand, from her voice, her nose and her eye, she might be twenty-six or twenty-eight.

That is sheer Naturalism—something midway between a police-report and a photograph of a stranger in a photographer's show-case. The "one, large, dark eye" is typical Naturalistic detail, a supposedly significant fact, but in reality of no value. It might as well have been her nose, or her leg : just as in typical Naturalistic description the woman who is having a baby may just as well be "looking at the blind flapping", or at "a fly crawling on the counterpane", or at "the smoke of her friend's cigarette curling to the lamp". Externals all—and all uninformative. Tchekov's true method is not to describe for description's sake but to suggest deeper meanings. So, *Verotchka*—

When Ognev later on remembered her, he could not picture pretty Verotchka except in a full blouse which was crumpled in deep folds at the belt and yet did not touch her waist ; without her hair done up high and a curl that had come loose from it on her forehead ; without the knitted red shawl with ball fringe at the edge which hung disconsolately on Vera's shoulders in the evenings, like a flag on a windless day, and in the daytime lay about, crushed up, in the hall near the men's hats, or on a box in the dining-room where the old cat did not hesitate to sleep on it. This shawl and the folds of her blouse suggested a feeling of freedom and laziness, of good-nature and sitting at home. Perhaps because Vera attracted Ognev he saw in every frill and button something naïve, cosy, something nice and poetical, just what is lacking in cold, insincere women who have no instinct for beauty.

There is a good deal of Naturalism there, especially the first half and the "knitted red shawl with ball-fringe at the edge". But in the main the shawl and Vera's dress are important because they *suggest* Vera's nature to Ognev and Ognev's nature to us. Tchekov lets these two natures play on one another in a manner which he has pre-decided, and as we observe them we come to a conclusion about them which is, in effect, his comment on them. He often does this. "I expect my readers to supply the subjective element which is missing in my stories."

We see him employ this device again in *The Lady with the Dog*, when he describes the libertine's wife—

She was a tall erect woman with dark eyebrows, staid and dignified, and as she said of herself, intellectual. She read a great deal, used phonetic spelling, called her husband not Dmitri but Dimitri, and he secretly considered her unintelligent, narrow, inelegant, was afraid of her and did not like to be at home.

One person presented through the eyes of another, and not externally ; though he does not despise externals when they can be made to work, as in the same story when the libertine sees the husband of his mistress enter the theatre—

He bent his head at every step and seemed to be continually bowing. Most likely this was the husband whom at Yalta, in a rush of bitter feeling, she had called a flunkey. And there really was in his long figure, his side-whiskers, and the small bald patch on his head, something of the flunkey's obsequiousness : his smile was sugary, and in his buttonhole there was some badge of distinction like the number on a waiter.

In more lyrical stories the intuitive penetration of this method comes nearer to the appearance of poetry, but it is exactly the same method for all that : as in *Ionitch*—

Her expression was still childish and her figure was soft and slim : and her developed girlish bosom, healthy and beautiful, was suggestive of Spring, real Spring.

The touch that *suggests*, this or that as the girlish figure here suggests Spring to her admirer, is the touch Tchekov always seeks. It is still the same method in his whimsical stories, and their humour, like the humour of Heine, is surely nothing else but the smiling tenderness of a poetic, not a realistic, conception of life and character. One thinks of the waiter, or of the pious peasant in *A Murder*, and thinks what Maupassant or Flaubert would have made of them, outlining them with cold, firm strokes : whereas Tchekov is content to chuckle over them in a good-natured way. Of the waiter he says that the poor man, who had once been manager of a first-class restaurant and worn a dress-suit and gold chains, now sells nothing but cheap vodka and sausages smelling of tar, about which he declares in contempt (thinking of days no longer his) " that they are only fit for the orchestra "—and at once you can visualize the sour, stupid, superior face of that waiter, though it has not been described at all. Of the pious peasant, Tchekov says that he read much in his lonely hut, where his brother and sister-in-law torment him, and inscribes into every book he reads such things as—

I Matvey Terehov have read this book, and think it the very best book of all the books I have read, for which I express my gratitude to the non-commissioned officer of the Police Department of Railways, Kuzma Nikolaev Zhukov, as the possessor of this priceless book.

Again, it matters nothing if that character has or has not been described : his secret, fumbling, happy-in-misery, lonely world is revealed in that quaint inscription that we can almost see him write and smile over in satisfied content.

It is this subtlety, this seeking after the imprint that reality makes on the inner life of men, that makes it difficult to analyse the alchemy of Tchekov. All one can do is to point to the effect he produces without hope of disclosing more than a tittle of the method. One may, for example, pounce on the indicative quality, rather than the reproductive quality of his natural descriptions,—and this is worth attention—but, in the end, one knows that it is not possible to imitate these indicative descriptions any more than by analysing a passage of Mozart one can re-assemble its component parts to like effect.

When, to illustrate this, he describes the poor priest's house in *A Nightmare* (vii) he does it with great attention to detail. Father Yakov hangs his hat, for example, not on a nail, but "on a huge misshapen nail". But nail, and furniture, in all their detail are organic to the humble character of the poor priest: and though anybody can think of such a detail as a misshapen nail it is the character of the priest which gives value to the detail: more, it is a story in which two natures clash, and the humble poverty of Father Yakov is constantly irking the rich gentleman who notes the nail, as he notes everything in the house, with distaste, and in that way even so tiny a detail becomes completely organic to the central idea of the story. As Tchekov has casually indicated, by means of the nail (there are other indications of poverty, indeed descriptions) the background of the priest, so does he always indicate rather than portray, and his backgrounds become therefore much more suggestive than if he had made us see them in all clarity.

Anybody who reads *The Murder* will remember, afterwards, that the scene was cold and wild and that there was a long description of a snow-storm. But if you go back to *The Murder* you find that the snow-storm has been polished off in one line. Here is the opening. I italicize the few words which mention the snow-storm.

The evening service was being celebrated at Progonnaya Station. Before the great ikon, painted in glaring colours on a background of gold, stood the crowd of railway servants with their wives and children, and also of the timbermen and sawyers who worked close to the railway line. All stood in silence, fascinated by the glare of the lights, and *the howling of the snow-storm which was aimlessly disporting itself outside*, regardless of the fact that it was the Eve of the Annunciation.

It is really the line, *All stood in silence, fascinated by the glare of the lights*, that consolidates the impression of the snow-storm in the mind—the image of the crowded hut, inside, and the dark, suggested by the glaring lights, inside, that turns the mind to the storm. This, one may be certain, is entirely deliberate. Did Tchekov not tell a fellow-writer, I think it was his brother Alexander, that if you want to suggest a moonlit night you should say that on the dam of the mill a bit of broken bottle flashed like a small star? And when admiring a story of Grigorovitch's, where a feeling of coldness was to have been evoked in the reader, he mildly said that the word "cold" should have been used more sparingly.

But, furthermore, that impression of a snow-storm, thus suggested, is not arbitrary choice of scene : it works into the tone-value of the whole story : it is not simple picturesqueness. It impresses us with a sense of the mute suffering, as of beasts in a winter field, that holds these peasants together, shut into that hut, in a kind of dumb, fatalistic effortlessness, and the murder, when it occurs becomes, literally, a brute act, and its effect is that of the dull sound of a blow by one poor brute killing another.

I might with ease poke out far more " suggestive " passages than that one, but the method is always identical. In *Easter Eve*—

The world was lighted by the stars which were scattered thickly all over the sky. I don't ever remember seeing so many stars. Literally one could not have put a finger between them. There were some as big as a goose's egg, some as tiny as hempseed. . . . They had come out for the festival procession, every one of them, little and big, washed, renewed and joyful, and every one of them was softly twinkling its beams.

That is description, if you like to call it description—but its essence is whimsical imagination.

Or—

When the service was over and the people going home it was warm and sunny ; the water *gurgled* in the gutters, and the unceasing trilling of the larks, *tender, telling of peace*, rose from the fields outside the town. The trees were already *awakening, and smiling a welcome*, while above them the infinite, fathomless blue sky stretched into the distance, *God knows whither*.

These words in italics do not depict—they tickle the imagination rather than the sense of sight or hearing. Or, in *The Bishop*—

When the bishop got into his carriage to drive home the gay, melodious chime of the heavy, costly bells was filling the whole garden in the moonlight. The white walls, the white crosses on the tombs, the white birch-trees and black shadows, and the far-away moon in the sky exactly over the convent, seemed now living their own life, part and incomprehensible, yet very near to man.

Really, one feels ashamed so to peep and botanize. And one sees how dangerous that kind of writing could be for a man of less natural charm of character, less natural poetry, less—this, above all—control of emotion. Yet, it is not all just merely natural genius with Tchekov ; a great part is hard work, self-conscious, deliberate craftsmanship, cutting, paring, altering, selecting. Go back suddenly from *The Murder* (1895) to our type-story, *Verotchka* (1887), which will now seem, by comparison, loose, garrulous, superficial : and you cannot fail to see how much Tchekov has done with his own talents by practice and patience. Compare the suggested snow-storm of *The Murder* with the laboriously evoked moonlight night of *Verotchka* :—

It was warm and still in the garden. There was a scent of mignonette, of the tobacco-plants, and of the heliotrope, which were not yet over in the flower-beds. The spaces between the bushes and the tree-trunks were filled with a fine soft mist soaked through and through with moonlight, and as Ognev long remembered, coils of mist that looked like phantoms slowly but imperceptibly followed one another across the avenue. The moon



stood high over the garden, and below it transparent patches of mist were floating eastward. The whole world seemed to consist of nothing but black silhouettes and wandering white shadows. Ognev seeing the mist on a moonlight August evening almost for the first time in his life, imagined he was seeing, not nature, but a stage effect in which unskilful workmen trying to light up the garden with white Bengal fire, hid behind the bushes and let off clouds of white smoke together with the light.

Since that date he had seen much more and thought much more and experienced many things that made him impatient with any aspect of reality but the heart of it, and all that contributed to the perfection of his natural genius. But he has also put his natural genius to school, and if, as he confessed, he often kept a story by him for months and months, for over a year at times, working and pondering on it, he had the reward of his toil as well as of his thought. A story like *Verotchka*, written by a young man of twenty-six or seven, does show that a writer is born not made. But the number of young writers who have not fulfilled similar early promise, and the perfection of a story like *Gooseberries* (v)—one of Tchekov's most perfect late stories (or of a play like *The Three Sisters*) comment, in different ways, on the responsibilities of heavenly gifts.

Parable :—There was once a poet who wrote good verse and a grocer who wrote bad verse, and they disliked one another. It pleased the grocer to employ the poet in his shop while he wrote his bad verse upstairs : and this also pleased the poet because he decided that within five years he would defraud the grocer and bankrupt him. When the five years were up the poet found that he had made a great deal of money ; but as for poetry—he had bankrupted himself. The year after the grocer brought out quite a passable book of verse . . .

Tchekov would not have written this parable—he did not believe in abstractions—but he would agree on the principle.



# AN EVENING WITH MAYAKOVSKY\*

By LEV KASSIL

THE MOSCOW POLYTECHNICAL Museum is besieged. Queues surging in disorder. Barriers are quaking. Crowd-pressure brushes all posters off the walls. The administrator is in a stew . . . he pops in and out of his box-office pigeon-hole like a bald cuckoo. He repeatedly requests the militia to clear the vestibule. Glass quivers. The door-springs moan. Hubbub. And Mayakovsky himself can't get into his own evening. It turns out he is held in ransom by the besiegers. They demand a price from him: fifty entrance tickets . . . all right, twenty! . . . then they'll release him. But he's already given away dozens of free passes and tickets. He has none left . . . cleaned right out. So Mayakovsky begins to force his way through to the entrance. He begins to push, heave, ram like a hemmed-in icebreaker. Then suddenly he passes through the very press of the crowd with remarkable ease.

"He went through them, like a hot iron through snow," remarked Shklovsky.

The hall is overcrowded. The public in the front rows are complaining. People are sitting in the gangways, on the stairways, on the edge of the stage, on each other's knees.

Not another ticket left. That's definite.

Mayakovsky fills the tiny dressing-room to overflowing. It quivers as he paces to and fro. He is cramped. He has great wide shoulders. In the corner of his mouth—a fag-end. Chewed like a bit.

Up the stairs comes the noise of the siege:

"MA—YA—KOV—SKY! . . ."

"LET—US—IN! . . ."

Vladimir Vladimirovitch says to me, almost in confusion: "Kassilchik, please . . . go to the administrator. I haven't got any more cheek. There's some Komsomols waiting, members of poetry study circles. I promised them. Get him to let five of them in . . . maybe . . . eight, well . . . say ten. Beat your chest, pull your hair, break your heart, and swear that these are the last. He'll believe you. He's believed it nine times already!"

By now the refractory audience is stamping with impatience. And Mayakovsky comes on. His appearance on the stage brings forth a burst of merry and welcoming clapping from the crater of the hall. Friends and companions in arms escort him on to the stage.

In one hand he holds a portfolio, in the other a glass of tea. The stage trembles under his steps. He shifts the table. Lays down his books in order. Poems. Paper. Watch. The spoon tinkles in the glass.

\* A translation of a poster announcing this 'evening' will be found on p. 11.

He makes himself at home. Takes his bearings, and is eyed by the public. He throws back the lapels of his jacket, sticks his hands behind in his belt : taking on an almost sportive pose.

"To-night," he begins, "I" (he roars) "shall . . ." (and then announces the programme of the evening) ". . . after the lecture there will be an interval for me to rest and for the public to express its delight."

"But when will you read your poems ?" mincingly some girl asks.

"Aha, you want the most interesting stuff to start right away ?" Mayakovsky replies in a similar mincing tone but with a bass voice.

The first peal of subdued laughter rolls through the hall. But the audience stores up its still hidden delight. And Mayakovsky rumbles through his lecture. Though really it isn't a lecture. It's a brilliant discussion, a most convincing story, a stormy monologue, a fiery speech. Full of the most interesting information, facts, raging demands, happiness, indignation, daring assertions, curiosities, aphorisms, parodies, epigrams, keen thoughts, provoking jokes, striking examples, blazing attacks, and acute formulas. Murderous deadly-aimed definitions and lashing jokes fall on to the heads and shoulders of the knights of philistine art, the stern indignation of the poet crashes upon them. Mayakovsky speaks. Stenographers write : "Laughter and applause . . . general laughter . . . stormy applause."

Notes fly down to the stage from all corners of the hall. Offended ones shout. Others hiss them. The offended ones are insulted. "Commotion in the hall" the stenographers record.

"Don't get frisky, comrades," replied Mayakovsky. He doesn't raise his voice a bit. But the thunder of his bass easily covers the noise of the whole meeting. "Don't get frisky . . . once I've begun speaking, it means, I shall end speaking. There isn't a man yet born who could out-shout me. You'll sit here like the damned and listen. . . . Hey, you there, in the third row, don't wave your gold tooth so threateningly. Sit down. And you put away that newspaper at once or leave the hall. Here you've got to listen to me, and not read. What ? You're not interested, here you are then, here's a tanner for your ticket. You may consider yourself at liberty. And you there—shut your door. What's the idea, flapping your jaw open like that. You're not a man, you're a cupboard."

Mayakovsky is warm. He takes off his jacket, and folds it accurately. Puts it on the table. Hitches up his trousers.

"I'm at work here. I'm hot. Have I the right to improve my conditions of labour ? Undoubtedly."

A certain shocked dame cries almost hysterically : "Mayakovsky ! What are you pulling up your trousers like that for ? It's disgusting to look at . . ."

"And if they drop, they'll be pleasant for you to look at, eh ?" Mayakovsky asks politely.

Lightning-like answers strike all those attempting to catch the poet.

"What? Now I can see you don't understand a damn thing. The meeting therefore resolves to consider you absent."

"Your jokes don't reach my understanding," bristles up the non-understanding one.

"You—are a giraffe," exclaims Mayakovsky. "Only a giraffe can wet his feet on Monday and not catch a cold till Sunday."

His opponents wilter. Stenographers put down brackets, meaning general applause of whole meeting.

Suddenly a bold young man jumps up.

"Mayakovsky," he cries challengingly, "do you take us all to be idiots then?"

"Now, now . . ." says Mayakovsky in surprise, "why all? So far I only see one standing before me."

Someone in horn-rimmed glasses and glittering tie mounts the stage and, without asking permission, declares heatedly and complainedly that "Mayakovsky is already a corpse and no poetry can be expected of him." The hall is indignant. The orator, unconfused, continues to slay Mayakovsky.

"That's strange," Mayakovsky said thoughtfully, "I'm the corpse, yet it's he that stinks."

That put the lid on that orator . . . when the laughter died away, in one of the corners of the hall someone else begins to shout in dissatisfaction.

"If you're going to make so much noise," said Mayakovsky persuasively, "it'll be the worse for you: I'll let loose the last orator on to you."

A fat little fellow clambers on the stage, bumping people aside in the process. He charges Mayakovsky with gigantomania.

"I must remind Comrade Mayakovsky," he said heatedly, "remind him of an old adage, which was known even to Napoleon: from the great to the stupid is but one step. . . ."

In that very second, lifting his leg elephant-like, Mayakovsky silently took one great stride, covering the distance between himself and the now bewildered chatterer.

"From the great to the stupid just one step!" and the hall bursts with laughter.

The conversation then turned, as it always does, to the classics, to their critical assimilation.

Someone from the Rights shouts scathingly:

"Aha! Mayakovsky been grabbed by the behind!"

"Well and what are you crowing about?" replied Vladimir Vladimirovitch. "Sure for us that's—behind. But for you—it takes the place of your literary face."

Mayakovsky states triumphantly : " Owing to wet weather fireworks postponed indefinitely."

Mayakovsky recites :

The excited hall thunders madly. They clap, stamp, shout, cheer . . . die down, thunder again . . . then Mayakovsky reads on . . . again the hall is stock-still. When suddenly from the second row a certain fat and bearded individual gets up noisily, and marches through the hall to the exit. His great beard lies on his fat chest like on a tray. Unperturbed by the hissing around him he makes his way out.

The hall splits with laughter. The bearded one, now quite dispirited and indignant, disappears through the door. Even the stenographers clap. And all around even the most stolid people are laughing in tears, almost in hysterics. . . .

"Mayakovsky! How much do you get paid for this evening's meeting?" "And what's it to do with you? You won't get a penny

out of it anyway. . . . Next." "What is your real name?" Mayakovsky with a secretive air bends towards the public: "Shall I tell? Pushkin. . . ." "Could a second Mayakovsky appear, say in Mexico?" "Hm . . . why not . . . I may go there once more, maybe marry . . . then a second Mayakovsky might appear. . . ." "Your poems are too topical. To-morrow they'll be dead. You'll soon be forgotten. Immortality . . . won't be your lot. . . ." "Well, you come along in a thousand years' time. Then we'll see. . . ." "Your last poem was too long." "Well, shorten it. You can stick your own name on the cut-outs." "Mayakovsky, you said that from time to time, you must wash yourself free of adhering traditions and habits. If you must wash yourself, then you must be dirty. . . ." "And you don't wash yourself and think yourself clean, eh?" "Mayakovsky, it's about time you chucked out those sitting behind your back." Mayakovsky quickly turned his back to the audience: "There, now I completely agree with the proposal . . ." he laughed over his shoulder.

"What's this? Ah, a familiar handwriting. I was waiting for this. At last it comes. 'Your poems are not understood by the masses.' So you're here. I've been waiting a long time to pull your ears. I'm just about fed up with you. Here's another: 'My comrades and I read your poems and didn't understand anything.' You must choose more clever comrades. 'Mayakovsky, with what part of you do you think you're a poet of the revolution.' In the place diametrically opposite to where that question was born. 'Mayakovsky, you consider yourself a proletarian poet-collectivist, and you're always writing I, I, I.' Well what do you think? Nicholas the Second, was he a collectivist? He always wrote We. We, Nicholas the Second. . . ."

And then in a break between bursts of laughter, he again continues, seriously and untiringly, the fight for the political poetry of our day.

The evening has ended. The Polytechnical Museum has emptied. We are riding home. Vladimir Vladimirovitch is tired. He is full of impressions and written questions. Pieces of paper stick out from all his pockets.

"Gets one tired," he said. "I'm knocked out. Trousers got nothing to hang on to! But it's interesting. I love it. Love to talk . . . and the public—no matter their age, they all come: they respect me; they know, the devils! That evening-class student in the balcony . . . surprisingly true grasp! It's a pleasure. Fine lads. . . ."

"Didn't I get a good one over that fellow with the beard? Eh?"

*(Translated by Bert Marshall)*

# IN RE CONFERENCES

By VLADIMIR MAYAKOVSKY

No SOONER THE night turns into dawn,  
when everyone whose job it is :  
goes to the " firm "  
goes to the " Co."  
goes to the " trust "  
goes to the " Corp.",  
they all disappear into offices.

Paper business pours like a torrent,  
no sooner you get in those offices :  
pick out from a hundred—  
the most important !—  
employees disappear into conferences.

When I appear and ask :  
" To whom can I refer ?  
Been here since once upon a time,"  
—" Comrade Ivan Ivanovitch has gone to confer "  
with " the people's commissar of teetotal wine ".

A hundred crippling stairs.  
Light barely blinks.  
Again :  
" Asks you to come back in an hour or so.  
In conference *re* the purchase of inks  
for the All-In-Co-op-Corp-and-Co."

In an hour : not a clerk,  
not an office boy appears—  
bare !  
Everyone up to twenty-two years  
is at the Komsomol conference upstairs.

Night is falling.  
I still climb on  
to the highest floor of my temporary home.  
" Has Comrade Ivan Ivanovitch come in ? "  
" Still in conference  
with the A-b-c-d-e-f-g-Com."—

I burst into that conference  
like a lava,  
with savage oaths the way is strewn,—  
and see :  
People are sitting there in halves.  
Heaven's above !  
Where on earth's their other halves gone ?

“ Slaughtered !  
Murdered ! ”  
Running like mad I shout—  
at such a picture I go out of my mind.  
Then I hear  
the calmest of clerks point out :

“ They're in two conferences at the very same time.  
Twenty conferences we have to attend to  
every day—and more to spare !  
So we're forced to split ourselves in two !  
Here to the waist,  
the rest  
over there.”

Can't sleep for suspense.  
I meet the dawn with dream-ridden senses :  
“ Oh,  
for just  
one more  
conference  
regarding the eradication of all conferences.”

*(Translated by Bert Marshall)*

## ICEBERG IS ANTHROPOMORPHIC

NOTHING BUT MAN  
can show so far in the skies :  
no bird, attenuating its design,  
or beast, a frozen cloud its mirror, show  
so remote an image as man can  
(his eyes fixed on terror of his enterprise)  
show himself his self's conquest :  
his spirit's outermost guest  
locked in the most vaporous ice ;  
surrounded by the arctic cloud, summoning  
the icy angel of his mood,  
standing in his nakedness' hood,  
none, but can cry :  
I am at home as much as when I stood  
in my fire-room, in my deep clothes ;  
I am the measure even of the snows  
I saw then :  
                    the berg's bridegroom,  
spirit's lusty rose !

PARKER TYLER.



# PETIT AUTOBIOGRAPHY

## *A Vertigral Poem*

THE STORY OF a tree  
is the story of me.

Tree or me thought  
hiatus was in the sky :  
between the branches and the eyebrows  
of the transient crow.  
Tree saw, and me,  
laughlovely in the breeze the crowlaugh,  
solidly a black bird lightening off  
the swinging bough and quivering leafery.

The black thought in the hiatus  
came as a surprise to us.

The wings came like two lies to us  
and were too hideous.

The craven crow with the bulging breast  
caged was, landlord of the sky's nest.  
The broken thought  
black was,  
unspoken ;  
deep in the tree's back,  
far in the little leaf,  
near in the vomit-root,  
little in the waisted trunk, and window ;  
jailed, big  
in the careless twig,  
with bars'  
bark toward the stars.

The spasm of our love  
had hiatus below, above :  
we were lifted with no love !

I saw the branch stand in air  
clad like a green young man there  
decked in his Sunday finery, with love to spare.

I saw the branch wave there  
with no roots in his hair,  
no hands to bare there  
the brown self in winter,  
place the red letter or the heart  
bloody on the autumnal splinter—  
how

the tree I saw was a standing world  
whereunder the snake Nothing curled  
tempting an Eve with no hair  
and no comb to comb it through with,  
nothing to do, no tree's apple to do with ;  
and a brave Adam thinking of nowhere.

Give, give, to us a middle. I saw

the brains of nothing take the tree by storm,  
like white  
snakes in the ground  
root the tree Night.  
And hiatus went winging through,  
through the entrails and the heart,  
the good legs ;  
and the two intelligent hands, apart  
in air like mated birds  
struck dim and doubtful there . . .  
the throat's bubble-sluice  
the widest heaviest moat  
and the head, obtuse  
like a huddled sentinel  
sick for a recalcitrant bell :

It was the tree, first, that fell.

PARKER TYLER.

## THREE POEMS

## I

THE BLUE LION poised upon the congregated currents caused by an  
express train  
showed golden tongue in the moonlight  
and barked

she's frightened within  
powders nose delectably and moistens lips  
and blue eyes limp over the wheels

of the shuttlecocked train on whining wheels  
morose beneath the slippy mass  
passing as racing-horses galvanized in steel

my hat holy on my head  
such peeping thoughts round the man  
my closed shoes bless my feet

or street in the air for the hale blue lion  
serrated teeth bashful before the polishing moon  
too bright  
but gold of tongue

## II

DOWN THE SHUTE whose sides  
are black feathers squealing with the fright of my dream  
goes the bundled heart  
to a white bulb blooming on the bottom

gather in your robes  
streaming like hair in the bitter drafts  
rolling deliriously in the flight of your fall  
bind your limbs to you be a helpless thing  
falling to this bulb and fundamental

laughing like the spilling of wine  
bathed in my shrieking skin I impinge upon  
the air down to the glowing light's node

## III

AND THE exquisite bells  
long strides of conversation held  
above spectrally  
meet in my brain in blue apparel to continue discussing  
the dark  
with probing sounds

you said you could  
continue to weave in many-coloured streams  
soft as saliva  
going in and out among the bells but

through bones the stiff tube train crashed its tunnel  
through goes like a beam of liking the bright-lit  
talk-filled chain of trains down through  
to the cloak-walled room of bells and you in

PHILIP O'CONNOR.

## CROSS COUNTRY

IN AERODROMES blue blades of grass  
Leap into a warning shape  
Good, contact, lunch, and gin in mess,  
Speed lost, three-point landings made.

In coloured plates of aero mags  
The war-crock fears a foreign speed ;  
They were crack ; now romance lags,  
No test ace doubts Italian leads.

Close-ups of sky engage trainees.  
Prep school boys know all the carded makes  
Two quid an hour dual amies  
Get off in a club tea dance break

In workshops, logs, jigs, no fags.  
Camera gun records are late.  
At eleven the watchman begs  
Woodbines, notes L. A. C.'s pass, shuts gate.

KEIDRYCH RHYS.

## SPECIAL AREA

Now a HEAVY hand lies on my land.  
 Each finger a claw  
 Of anaemic blood oozed in the dunes of sand  
 That holds the paw.

And wristy hairs are sparse in a light  
 Drawn in the earth,  
 Knuckled with slagheap warts and pylons' flight  
 Shamed of their birth.

Where bodies masquerade in a thumb joint  
 To weather blots,  
 A cry of a puncturing fire pinpoint  
 Burns unused lots.

Tuned to a harp the tips are white in sun  
 Nerved to the seas,  
 They long for the cannibal life of guns  
 In a blood breeze.

KEIDRYCH RHYS.

## SPILLING THE BEANS

(DIALECT)

SPILLING THE BEANS you are bad voice ; hard Diawl  
 Stoops in the paper wormwood from prompt Taffy  
 Like the slippery tinges of rag-trade pens.  
 Look you inteet, now that's for stricken overture  
 The divine go-getter in the cockle street  
 Sincere to Shakespeare's funny totter  
 True as a giggle that drums his mists of genius  
 To sip the bushy ointment of election beer  
 In some back snug : to Kiddies pear-drops  
 Weird as Lord Melchett, as jet roads of graft  
 And there that royal doctor's bed-pan farm  
 And this our hamlet where Jeremy Taylor cried  
 Yet bitter is minister's righteous mutter.  
 Hear you not gypsy the local poll results.

KEIDRYCH RHYS.

## THE "PARADISE"

By LOUIS GUILLOUX

(Continued)

MY TOWN POSSESSED a theatre of its own with this striking peculiarity, that it was nearly always shut. It looked like a derelict house. The town was much too poor to keep up its own company, much too insignificant for the companies of the big centres even to dream of visiting it. But it sometimes happened—once or twice a year perhaps—that for some exceptional reason—we always thought it was by mistake—a company of amateurs would hire the theatre for one night. The town drummer thundered the news through the principal thoroughfares.

He was an old pensioner with the moustaches of a grenadier, who had hobbled through a wretched existence ever since Gravelotte. He beat upon his drum as ferociously as he had done, so it was reported, under the nose of the Prussians during a charge. His real name was Sylvain Collet. But for so many years he had had the mania of relating the battle of Gravelotte, when he was a little screwed, that no one in the town knew him by any other title than Père Gravelotte. He was proud of it. On the 14th July he joined the march past of the troops, not beating his drum but carrying aloft the veterans' banner.

As years went by and the old soldiers closed their ranks as they had done under the enemy's fire, Père Gravelotte grew more staid. It was as if he had become conscious that he had been specially entrusted with the mission of carrying on, through as long a space of time as possible, the memory and proof of a day of such immense sorrow and pain, of which he himself had had his full share. And he, who was so fond of drinking, who was so often seen reeling in the streets and sometimes even lying in the gutter, was able on the 14th July to keep respectable, and as steady on his legs as his lame foot allowed, so that no one should say that he had failed in his oath of fidelity towards his fellow-soldiers, so many of whom had perished on that dreadful day of slaughter.

Amongst us boys he inspired as much admiration as fear. Rub-a-dub-dub ! Another roll of the drum ! And then he would stick his drum-sticks into their brass case in his belt, put his spectacles on his nose and pull out of his pocket a very dirty piece of paper which he proceeded to read aloud. "This is to give notice that on Saturday evening the Society of Dramatic Art will give a performance of *Les Escapades de Frispoulet* at the Municipal Theatre." Another rub-a-dub-dub ! We followed him about everywhere.

Now for some time we had noticed that Père Gravelotte was getting shaky. His leg dragged more, the tap of his drum-sticks was less decided, he often failed to reach the end of his story without rambling, and even when he was not tipsy, he gave queer answers to people's questions.

One day he stopped dead in the middle of his drumming. We were amazed to see him open his mouth without uttering a word and turn up the whites of his eyes. One of his drumsticks slipped from his hand. We thought he was going to collapse. But he pulled himself together. He seized the stick some kind soul had picked up and handed him, and began drumming again furiously, with a magnificent air of rage. And when he had finished, instead of pulling out his bit of paper to read, he took his handkerchief out of his pocket to mop his forehead. The sweat was pouring from it in streams. He mopped for a long time with a jerky motion of his hand. "I thought I saw the Prussians!" we heard him mutter.

Not that we never had a chance of seeing something better than an amateur piece like *Les Escapades de Frispoulet*. From time to time such grand and glorious works as *Papillon dit Lyonnais le Juste* were announced. Or even *Carmen*, which a Paris company came on purpose to give in our theatre, as if moved by pity for our provincial backwater, or else as an experiment—which was never followed up.

Now, unless on one of these exceptional occasions, such as this visit from a Paris company, Père Gravelotte never brought out his drum except on days when the town was at its busiest—that is to say on market days, when the fish-market was all astir and the streets leading to the Evêché thronged with middle-class ladies hurrying along to haggle over the price of eggs, and followed by their maid-of-all-work carrying a shopping-bag. Now, many of these ladies belonged to that same Society of Dramatic Art. Who would have thought that among these prim housewives, so aggressive in their bearing, so impeccable in the propriety of their clothes, who would bargain so relentlessly for a halfpenny off the pound of butter, there was also to be found a *Carmen*? That among those small clerks and officials who slunk out of their Prefecture to go and take a nip on the sly, was a Don Juan or an Othello—or, at any rate, a Basil? The masquerade then was carried as far as this! Appearances even here were a sham! There was no trusting anything and nothing was real but the fishwife who was a genuine fishwife, and the maid, who, in spite of everything, would not be mistaken by her mistress for a soubrette. There was no chance, however, that the dream would ever coincide with the reality, no hope that the ideal love with which they were inspired on the stage would make the slightest change in their everyday conjugal relations.

Next morning the preparations would begin. There was a tremendous bustle—a coming and going all round the theatre; the municipal dustmen, with Père Gravelotte at the head of them, were called in to clean up, to brush the velvet seats, to remove the spiders' webs with which the boxes were festooned. All this was not carried out without a considerable racket. The window fastenings had become too rusty to move. Rain and snow had so soaked the wood, the sun had so warped



it that the two halves of all the windows and folding doors were as though glued together, and had to be hammered apart. If a window-pane broke in the process, what did it matter? No bones were made about stopping up the hole with cardboard.

Besides sweeping, the dustmen's job comprised giving chase to the rats, mice, and cats that had taken up their abode in the theatre as in their private palace. They also had to see to the proper working of the curtain, and above all to get the chandelier ready.

I don't suppose anyone can imagine what this chandelier was like and the place it filled, not only in the auditorium, but in the hearts of my fellow-townsmen. Many things in their town may have seemed to them in bad taste, and they may even have fancied themselves a little for their freedom in criticizing them. But the theatre chandelier! The chandelier! Who would have dared suggest that it was not a marvellous work of art, an incomparable treasure? This chandelier, together with one or two view-points, the collection of stuffed birds in the museum, and the cemetery, were the things on which my fellow-citizens especially prided themselves and which they never failed to show or to point out to a visitor, as soon as he set foot in the town. And yet what was this chandelier? Nothing but a frightful congeries of small cups, intended to hold candles and made out of the coarsest and commonest glass that was ever poured into moulds. Some hundred or more candles could be stuck into it, which gives some idea of its weight and size. It was hoisted up to the ceiling by a rope wound round a pulley and could be raised or lowered at will by means of a windlass concealed under the roof. The marvel is that the rope never gave way, that the monstrous grapple never crashed down into the middle of the stalls, burying in its huge fragments all the choicest play-goers in the town, and setting fire to the four corners of the theatre. It was shaped like an ordinary middle-class hanging lamp—a cone stuck into the ceiling by its point; and, like the bourgeois hanging lamp too, it was carefully swathed in rose-coloured silk as soon as the performance was over. This was done with a solicitude at least as great as Monsieur le Curé's when, in the Cathedral, he covers the most charming of his plaster virgins and saints with a veiling of gauze. The chandelier was no doubt an immense boon for the people in the stalls and boxes, but for us in the gallery among the gods, it was an unspeakable nuisance. It simply blocked out our whole view. We had to perform prodigious feats of acrobacy in order to get a glimpse of what was taking place on the stage, on the other side of this monster. We all ricked our necks in the attempt.

When an exceptional circumstance necessitated putting the theatre in order, fitting fresh candles into the chandelier, opening the windows to get rid of the horrid mouldy smell which never entirely vanished, the first thing to be done was to dislodge the band of loafers who used

to warm themselves in the sun outside its doors. Père Gravelotte with the municipal dustmen and one or two policemen set to work with shouts, and occasionally with kicks, to drive them into one of the back streets, there to scratch and sleep. The doors were then flung open, the carpets brought out to be beaten in the square, and pieces of scenery were shifted about before my very eyes. All these activities were the enchanting preparations for an entertainment at which it was never absolutely certain that I should not be present. I don't see why I should deny how much I hankered after every kind of entertainment and how ready I was for the most reprehensible transactions for the sake of being present at them. The very sight of the theatre put me into a state of excitement almost as violent as love, and as soon as it was announced that a play was going to be given, my whole life centred round that single thought. I did not say to myself that I had a right to this pleasure. I was still without hatred. I thought ingenuously that everything depended on my luck or my cunning. I ought also to add—on my perseverance.

The only part of this theatre into which I could ever hope to enter with my muddy feet was, it goes without saying, the part which in France is called the "hen-house" or the "Paradise", and in Germany the "Olympus". I am ignorant of the contemptuous or ironical names other countries use to blaspheme that topmost gallery, beloved of the populace and unvisited by any sweepers. None of our town dustmen ever went near it. Every time one went into it, one found that to its heaps of filth had been added the filth of the preceding day—dried mud mixed with plaster fallen from the ceiling, disgusting yellow cigarette ends, bits of desiccated orange-peel as hard as shells, scraps of paper, sometimes a penny bunch of flowers, forgotten there by some young man's sweetheart—all this was to be found on those benches that had no velvet upholstery, for the inhabitants of the "hen-house" contented themselves with the barest of boards in this dirtiest of perches. This was the stuff each new arrival had to sweep up for himself before spreading on his seat a newspaper he had brought for the purpose, just as in summer, at the races or at the velodrome, he would unfold his handkerchief and spread it on the ground. There was a powerful stench. Above our heads in the "Paradise", were the beams and joists of the unceilinged roof. From this place of darkness there descended upon us a treacherous moisture, permeated by the smell of decomposing plaster, mouldering wood, and the dejections of cats and vermin.

Why was there no velvet on the benches? Why was this "hen-house" left in such a loathsome state? I think it must have been for *abstract reasons*.

When at last the day of the play came round—and it was always too long in coming—I could never be sure of being free, and my first manœuvres, and not the least difficult, had to be directed to getting

permission from my grandfather to go out. But I had to take great care to conceal the truth. If I had confessed that I wanted to go to the theatre, he would have set his face against any such attempt, and even if I had had the money for a ticket, he would still have refused. This was why I lied to him. But there was still another reason, and this was my extreme shyness about showing my pleasure, my irresistible reluctance to betraying it. After I had succeeded then in opening this first door, I thought that everything else was in my power. I even felt a kind of joy—vainglorious, perhaps, and certainly spiteful and sneaking—to think that nevertheless I should outwit them all and enter the forbidden place in spite of them. I did not hurry but walked quietly through the dark streets till I came to the illuminated square. I generally found a good many carriages which had arrived before me and, if the doors were not yet open, a waiting crowd. But the owners of the carriages were not among the crowd. They had gone in by another door which was only opened for them, and they were already, no doubt, chattering in the *foyer*. For I had learnt that our theatre too possessed its *foyer*, and that in our God-forsaken provinces, a kind of unaccustomedness, a too impatient desire for change and novelty nearly always made our fine gentlemen and grand ladies arrive long before the candles were lit. As for the crowd that thronged towards the doors, it was composed entirely of candidates for the "Paradise"—workmen and women who by good luck happened to have two or three pence in their pockets and had hastily bolted their supper so as to be in time to get the best places. A battle often started at the very doors. A special box-office was put up for us on the left as you went in. The top-hats took their tickets at another box-office safely separated from ours by a velvet rail and a number of theatre attendants—not to mention Père Gravelotte.

On theatre nights Père Gravelotte was always on guard at the doors to check the tickets. He was dressed up in his finest togger, with a municipal cap on his head, adorned with a lyre as a reminder of his drum. These were glorious evenings for him, and you would have thought he was mounting guard over a bivouac fire, facing the enemy, instead of at the door of a theatre. Need I say that he was incorruptible? Who indeed could have thought of corrupting him? With the noted loyalty of the old soldier who is deaf to all but the word of command, he diligently forestalled the slightest infraction of orders, and from as far off as he could see us—prowling and penniless urchins that we were—he would point an outstretched finger to the polished toe of his boot.

A vast wooden staircase, as resonant as a bell, led, between two green and sticky plaster walls, to the gallery. The favourites of fortune or daring scaled it at a run—Paradise was theirs, and the devil take the hindmost!

How often I mixed with the waiting crowd, as if everything were

going to happen to me as to them! I bestowed upon myself the mad hope that *the difference wouldn't show*, and pretended that I myself didn't know it. Perhaps I hoped too that one push of the crowd's, a little more violent than usual, would carry me up involuntarily. But I very soon found out that the miracle would never take place without some collaboration on my part. One learns as best one can, and with what capabilities one possesses, to be distrustful of the gods.

*(Translated by D. S. Bussy)*

# THE BLIND MAN'S WARFARE SAGA

By HALLDÓR STEFÁNSSON

WHAT DID *SHE* know what it was to sit in the dark day and night.

Even during the dark nights the thought is unbearable, that as the day breaks there is no light for those blind eyes ; and as soon as one wakes up in the morning it is proved to one that the night has not been a horrible dream, but is the dreadful truth which can never change, misfortune which neither prayers nor a strong will can ever overcome.

It is terrible to feel the sunshine in your face and to be unable to see the rays. When it has warmed the eyes for a long time, some very hot and red spots seem to appear ; but even that is only imagination, only warmth, not light. To hear work going on all round you and to be unable to do anything for yourself, simply because the eyes have gone blind and there is always coal black darkness. To listen to the fast unhesitating footsteps of people, and yourself have to feel your way by the stone fence you have yourself built and yet do not know any better than to stumble over the same stone time and again. To have to depend upon the people's voices and therefore to be made fun of and ridiculed, with looks and signs which you cannot see. . . It is as if one is talking to fairies, and in one's mind a suspicion is sown that everybody is lying to the blind man.

How can *she* know what it is to come out first thing in the morning and be unable to foretell the weather, because you cannot see the clouds in the sky nor the waves on the ocean, and therefore cannot give advice if the men are going out for their fishing when the east wind is blowing up or be unable to tell them what brainless idiots they are when they laze about on shore and the bay is as smooth as a millpond ? Has *she* any idea how dreadful it is to hear them describe an unknown ship which sails in the bay or a stray horse which has been roaming with the horses from the farm and because your eyes are blind you cannot comment on any of those things, although you are sure you could decide all those questions if only you had your sight ?

If he did not remember so well everything which he had seen while his eyes were all right, if he did not have such longing to share the life of the seeing people, this cross might be easier to bear. If from the time he was born he had never seen anything, none of these things would matter. He would not care how the new farmhand was getting on with the mowing, or how the men put the boat away when the storm was blowing up from the east.

To know how necessary it is for him to keep an eye on everything on this farm which he has built, this farm which has taken all his youth, his strength and work for a whole lifetime, and now to be unable to see as much as a glimmer of light !

Has *she* any idea how he suffers in not being able to see what she looks like ? How hopeless it is when he has only got her voice and the feeling of her hands when she pinches him, with which to make a picture of her in his mind.

The first day she was on the farm he thought he would feel her face with his fingers to try to get a vision of her looks, not that he thought this feeling with one's fingers was any good. He had once upon a time heard that clever and educated men that became blind got more feeling in their finger-tips than an ordinary person and therefore it became a tremendous help in their blindness, and he wanted her to think that he was an educated man and could see a lot through his finger-tips, so she had better be careful with the way she treated him. Or perhaps it was because he disliked her from the first day and wanted to show her that he was neither afraid or shy of this new mistress who could see. This was their first duel.

"Well, if the blind old fool is not going to try and flirt with me," said she and slapped his hands. Her voice was loud and harsh and he felt she despised him for it. He therefore thought she had a large nose and a very wide mouth.

After this he hated her, and in trying to show his hatred, rolled his large yellow eyes whenever she was near. She did not like this as she knew that it was meant for her, and the farmhands understood what it was for and laughed at the old man's funny ways.

The hate was now mutual, and the war began between the blind old man and the new mistress.

He could quite understand that his son wanted to marry, but he could have done it before, while his father could see and could have helped him choose a wife that was worthy to become a mistress on this farm which the old man had built up. But his son had always been a weakling and had put this off while the old man could see and could have had a say in the matter. This marriage was nothing but what his son had been drawn into, as it showed plainly his weakness that he only dared to sit and stand as his wife wished.

That *she* should rule his son like this made the old man hate her all the more, and he became more obstinate in this warfare. He felt he was all alone in this war against her and he found no consolation anywhere in his hate for her, for she ruled the farm labourers with an iron hand.

He tried to give his son his confidence and so to get him away from her, but he only found out that *she* made her husband tell her everything the old man told him and through that he lost his last possessions.

He told his son that a few of his friends here and there owed him a

few shillings from the time when he had been able to sell them something or other. He had it all written down in his pocket-book and asked his son to try and collect the money, so that he could use it for snuff and odd things which he wanted. But his son told *her* and she took the book and went and collected the money and he never had so much as a penny from it. He only got scolded for his meanness by her, and his creditors, who were his old friends and neighbours, also scolded him for asking for the money.

One of them said : " I never thought you would make me pay those few shillings after all those years, and as difficult as it is for me to get hold of them just now,—and—you who are blind."

Blind—yes, he had to be reminded about that, just as if he could ever forget it, asleep or awake. They ought to be blind, those men, only for one day or even for one hour, to know the sufferings. It is not the being unable to see the blessed light or the things and the faces of those you love. It is not this dreadful darkness all round you, this darkness which is like a damp thick black fog enveloping your soul. It is the being so utterly helpless, unable to use the strength you feel is in your body, unable to use your legs and arms freely. When you cannot do anything, the strength gradually leaves the body and you feel so helpless and weak, and always have to believe what you hear. The old man feels he is losing his sense of judgment, when he has always to depend on what he hears, and therefore he knows his judgment cannot be right, because he is blind.

And then *she* took his snuff from him.

She did not think there was any sense in his taking snuff as he only made himself and everything round him dirty.

It was no use that her husband tried to take the old man's part. She only took the snuff box away from him and he did not so much as see a snuff corn after that.

He fumbled his way into the field behind the house and there he laid down and cried. But there is no use in crying when you are blind. You never see new hope through the tears. You only feel them rolling down your old wrinkled cheeks. They don't really do any good and you feel inside yourself that the people might find it funny to see a blind man cry.

It is so tragic that people who can see should use their strength against the blind, take everything away from them and will not let them do or have anything to make up for their blindness. They forget, though, that he is really the master of this home, and that they just came and took everything away from him. They forget that this is all his, his home, his possessions ; but they take it all for granted as theirs, and look upon him as a burden which has been put on them and must be borne as best they can.

After this his only consolation became the lice.

It sounds unbelievable to people that can see that anybody could find any consolation in biting lice, although he is blind and his snuff has been taken away from him. But that is how it was. Even if Freud could have explained this, or proved that this could not happen, this is the truth. He fished them from under his neckband with his fingers, put them between his teeth—and bit. There was a loud crack. He did not need sight for this sport. He could find them in the dark and put them between his teeth without any help.

But this poor sport did not last long. She saw him do it, and he did not think he would have to hide this innocent sport.

She was so thunderstruck that her voice became like a harsh whisper. And then she hit him once, twice, three times; how many times, he did not know; but the blows came like hail everywhere on his face and body. "I have never known such a filthy beast as you," she said at last. And then she slapped him again and again. No matter which way he turned, she always got him. That was the first time he came in contact with her hands, so he added to his picture of her that she must have a very low forehead.

That she should have found this out only made him all the more eager to continue his performance, so he swore under his breath and only did it when she was not near. All the same, he could not get behind her, she tiptoed into the bedroom where he sat; she used to walk as noiselessly as she talked so he was not prepared for her, so before he knew she was there she was slapping him both sides and scolding him as fast as her tongue would go. Still he continued this. This was war, he knew she disliked it so it made him even with her for the slappings he had had.

But the people that can see always have the advantage of the blind and can always find some way out which beats them. She made up her mind she was going to end this filthy habit of the old man's.

One day she brought in a pair of scissors and cut all the hair of his head and his beard. A shiver went through the old man when he felt the cold steel go over his head and face. He did not dare move while this destruction was being done. He hated her twice for this shameful action. When it was done, she fetched a large wooden bath, tore the clothes off him and washed him from head to foot with disinfectant. He was like a baby in her strong hands, and she did not take the slightest notice of his feeble oppositions; he did not even have the satisfaction of being unconsciously rude while she washed and rubbed him. When she had finished she put him to bed with clean sheets and let him stay there until the next day, when she gave him some clean underclothing to put on. After this cleansing, she took such care over him as if he were a new-born baby, and never let so much as one hair grow on his head again.

For a long time after this the old man was silent and unhappy. His



hunger for the snuff grew and made him dull. His thought went from one thing to another, he could not keep his mind on one thing or on anything, and his memory started to fail. He got restless and kept on looking for something in his pocket which was not there and which he never found. He lost his appetite and this restlessness made him go out and fumble outside as much as possible. He felt ashamed of being bald like this and felt cold and naked. He knew he must look like an outlaw or a vagabond in the eyes of the farmhands. They had never bothered much about him, but now they kept out of his way. Neither had he any longing to speak to them. He felt like giving it all up.

His son tried to show him kindness, as if to make up for his wife's actions, but it was really only pity, which the old man answered with : " You had better be careful and not let your wife see you speak to me. She might take the carving knife to your throat."

After this, he got more lonesome than ever and suffered more and more because of the want of snuff. At night, he could not sleep. He could not do anything to shorten the long days, he could not even knit, but all the same he thanked the Lord for that because she had once said it was a disgrace he could not do anything to help on the farm, he was utterly useless. He would rather suffer from lack of occupation than do anything to please her.

That is how the whole summer went by. He fumbled out when the weather was nice and sat under the south wall, silent and unhappy, a poor old blind man who suffered from loneliness and want of snuff, and was not even allowed to bite lice because of his daughter-in-law's domination.

Sometimes one of the dogs would come up to him and lick his hands and face with its rough tongue. Then, he could have shed tears over those four-legged animals' faithfulness, who judged by their smell and not by human opinion. But when the mistress called them : *Freyja*, *Sámur*, and the dogs left him to follow her in and have their food, he cursed them for obeying her,—*she*, who ruled his house, and he knew she would always beat him in everything.

But he still would not give in, he made up his mind to make her life as miserable as he possibly could. He gradually started feeling better after the loss of his snuff and got more used to his bald head. His mind began to think of some ways to annoy her. So when she was near and he was sure she could hear him he started to mumble old rhymes about " Witches ", " Ogresses ", and evil spirits.

It would never do to scold anybody for saying an Icelandic rhyme, as it would make others think that one could not appreciate this very fine old national art. So she made out she did not hear him, and scolded him for the slightest thing, even if he had not done it. Then winter drew in, the days got short and the nights and evenings long, and the people on the farm could not see much more of the blessed daylight

than the blind old man. Then *she* decided to give him something to do to make himself useful. She made him comb the wool. She put the wool between the combs herself, sat on the next bed to him, and kept an eye on him the whole time, so that he could not spoil any of the precious wool.

But though he was dying to do something, to have something between his hands rather than have nothing to do but to think of his handicap and his loneliness in the dark, he was determined not to do anything to please this, his tormentor.

The farmhands had stopped talking to him and only answered him with shortness when he asked them about anything he wanted to know. They thought it was safer to keep peace with her as she was the stronger of the two, in this war. They did not read the Bible any more during twilight, and an uncomfortable silence settled over everybody.

The old man rubbed the combs together and rolled his large yellow eyes. He figured out with all the shrewdness a blind old man could have, how to let the wool slide to the floor, accidentally of course, and rub the combs empty together.

"Are you going to spoil the combs, you damned fool," shrieked the mistress, "can you not see they are empty and you are combing with no wool?"

In her fury she was accusing a blind man of not being able to see, accusing him of this sense which he had not.

"No, I could not see it," retorted the old man. The farmhands could not hide their smiles and amusement, and the master looked very uncomfortable. "This is nothing to laugh at," said the mistress and at the same time took away the combs.

She put some more wool in the combs and gave them back to him with the words that he had better be careful and do the work properly.

He rolled his eyes and there was a smile on his face. It amused him to think he had made the farmhands laugh at her and he was very pleased with himself. He was so clumsy with the combing that he made no progress at all, and the whole time he was mumbling to himself, "I just cannot see a thing." At last the mistress gave up and took the combs away from him.

The next evening she gave him some stockings to work, to make them shrink.

He had lived on the previous evening's happenings all day and was in a happy mood. During the midday meal he accidentally knocked into the mistress in the hall, and he could not help saying, "I am sorry but did not see you," although he got a slapping for it.

But now it started getting unpleasant. How was he going to make excuses for not being able to see to rubbing the stockings? This was absolutely hopeless and he felt it. How could he continue to fight against this woman who had all the tools in her hands and knew exactly

how to use them? In his desperation he got out his pocket knife and cut a large hole in one of the stockings. She jumped up and tore the wet stockings away from him and then let them fly round his head, until he rolled on the bed, screaming with pain.

"That is nice treatment on an old man," said one of the maids, but the master walked out silently.

The mistress sat down again on the bed, pale and shaking from exhaustion and fury. She spun as if it meant life or death. Everybody was glad when it was bedtime.

Then came Christmas and the raisins.

The raisins in the Christmas rice-pudding gave the old man a new idea of how to annoy her again. He collected all the stones and put them in his waistcoat pocket, where they dried and became quite crisp. A few days after Christmas they were all having dinner and the old man sat on his bed. The mistress thought she heard a crack which she had heard before, so she looked over to where the old man was sitting. Sure enough, he was biting something between his teeth. She at once jumped at him: "Have you again started this filthy habit, you dirty beast? How you get hold of bloody lice I can't understand! Have I not tried to keep you clean?" Then she slapped him, but he took the slaps this time, and when she had finished he said as innocently as he could: "It is only raisin stones, cannot you see that?", at the same time pushing the remains of the pips on to his lip. The people had to hold on to themselves, so as not to burst out laughing, but the mistress stood helplessly in front of the old man, unable to understand his shrewdness.

While the stones lasted he played this trick time and again, always taking care there was plenty of people around. But when they were finished, he got lost again and the dark closed deeper around him.

This darkness which was like a closed door, that would never open again. You sit behind closed doors and can hear life flowing by, hear its happiness, know of its beauty and feel no sympathy from it towards those who are shut in this awful dark blindness. In this everlasting darkness hatred and jealousy are born; but both are so useless and aimless that out of them rises melancholy and unbelievable self-pity, which no man that can see will ever understand. Everlasting comparisons and wishes that he had rather lost his hearing, his speech, an arm or leg, anything but his sight; blindness, helplessness; and the wishes end with a prayer that he be dead; and then the prayer changes to plans about ending his life. But all these thoughts are useless, when you are blind you are a useless individual that cannot even see to end your own life. Anyway those thoughts only make him suffer more.

The war between him and his daughter-in-law continued. There were no big battles. The enemies became nerve-wracked in waiting

for each other to make the next move, but neither did anything but wait. This, of course, showed plainly on the mistress as she was now pregnant. Her excited temper could not stand the nearness of the blind foe any more. Day and night it tormented her to know he was so near, and at last she found she could not endure him any longer. She decided to send him to a near-by farm, at any rate for the time being or until the child was born, and of course she was ready to pay for his board.

When she told her husband, she was surprised to find him very much against this plan, and when he said his father would never be moved from his own home and placed as a paying guest at one of his old friends' farms, certainly not by his own will, it only made her more determined to get the old man away. With her strong will she made her husband get the old man on false pretences to the farm where she had found a place for him.

When the old man got to know that he was not going home for some time, he went raving mad. He broke everything he got hold of, rolled his big yellow eyes and frightened the wife and the children so that they did not dare go near the house. He ended up by threatening the farmer that he would kill them all during the night. The farmer saw only one way out, so he put the old man on a horse and took him back home again. The mistress met them in the courtyard with such a string of words that the farmer took to his heels as fast as he could, leaving the old man sitting on his horse. No more attempts were made to send the old man away again.

Now the enemy had shown her head above the trenches, there was nothing for him but to charge against her. And he got his chance. One of the farm-hands was leaving the farm for good and as he was not likely to meet the mistress again he was willing to take a message to the parish overseer, to come immediately and see the old man, as it was a case of performing his duty.

The parish overseer came at once, it was not often he was called out for official duty, and he looked upon his office as a serious thing which must be attended to at once and, of course, he had to look after his position in the parish.

The old man demanded nothing more nor less than that all his possessions be taken and sold at an auction straightaway; also that his share in the boat and the farm be put up for sale, as it was in his name. "For the money I get I ought to be able to live comfortably with some human beings, buy myself snuff now and again, and when all the money is gone the parish can take care of me. And I am having my say in whom the farm is sold to, as the buyer is not to be related to the mistress here in any way."

Well, this was a real air attack.

By the sale all that his son had would go to the wind. He had, of course, had use of all the old man's implements and tools and the old

brown mare. He would also no longer be ground-owner and the parish would make him help his father as long as they could but that could not be for long. As far as the old man could see the parish would have to help his son and his wife when everything was gone and *she* would not like to accept parish relief.

The parish overseer, who also was a member of the parish council, was not very pleased with the old man's decision. Of course, the whole lot of them would end up on the parish, and some lazy swine from one of the other parishes would come, pinch the farm for very little money, pay no rates or taxes and meet no liabilities and, of course, as usual the parish and the members of the council would have to suffer.

The parish overseer was very much in favour of the League of Nations and did most certainly want to keep peace and prevent war, but, of course, he had his duty to perform. The Peace Conference was set, and was on until far into the night, began again the next morning, and in the evening they had an Armistice. Before the following morning the Peace Pact was signed.

In few words this is how it ran : The blind man would not sell the farm, for the time being—that, he insisted on being put in the pact—his son was to have use of his possessions, alive and dead, without payment, as before. He himself was to have as much snuff as he wanted (and a boy was sent down to the village straightaway to get some and with instructions not to stop anywhere on the way). His son's wife was to stop all unnecessary cleaning on him and he need not wash nor change clothes except when he himself wished.

When the boy brought the tobacco from the village, the old man started to cut it immediately. But the mistress went straight to bed and pulled the cover over-head although it was noon.

It is a proved thing that Peace Pacts never make both sides contented and sometimes neither side. Although peace is kept, the hatred still lives and the wish to revenge is born in the one that has not gained by the pact : but the fear for that revenge is born in the other. Therefore peace ought never to be made. You can also say that war ought never to be started, and that can only be done by everybody working together and for the same ideal.

The old man enjoyed his victory and he used a lot of snuff. In the presence of the mistress he took his snuff loudly and made this performance as noisy as he possibly could.

The mistress's attitude towards her father-in-law changed from bullying domination to utter indifference and silence. To her husband she showed very little affection.

One day the blind old man became a grandfather and by that a new chapter starts in this warfare story.

This unbelievable and helpless baby-cry brought something back

to life which had been dead inside the old man, something which had for a long time been buried far in there, something he had tried to kill. Never had any voice spoken to him in this language which he understood as well as this baby-cry. He felt that this little human being had something in common with him, he was also helpless. In the dark blindness of his eyes he listened in deep silence to its voice.

The more he heard the voice of this little grandson of his, the more he was drawn to him and the more he felt how alike they were. Then, one day when he knew he was alone in the bedroom with the baby, he fumbled his way to the cot and let his finger-tips run over the baby's face and head. The pure and innocent baby skin sent a hot current through to his heart and woke more strength in the body, which made him feel as if the Lord himself had touched him.

But these glorious moments did not last long. He heard a loud shriek and felt the mistress jump at him. She had only one thought; that the old man was going to strangle the baby. As she was going to give him a much deserved scolding and punishment she looked into his face. Although his eyes were blind, and the expression was dead in them, his face showed such godly holiness and peace, that the words froze on her tongue and the only thing she could find to say was: "You must not put snuff on the baby," and at the same time she wiped the baby's face. There was a long silence and the mistress took a very long time over putting the baby straight again.

Then the blind old man very shamefaced and clumsily put out his hand with the snuff-box, and in an unrecognizable voice said: "I will never take snuff again, if only I may sit with him."

*(Translated by Aslaug Foss Poulton)*

# NIGHT IN A STABLE

By HSIAO HUNG

WHEN HE SAW the string of brass bells round the neck of the horse his old eyes became dimmed and he could not make out that the man on horseback was the companion of his youth. . . .

Feng Shan—ten years ago he had been admitted by all to be the best hand at hunting, but now he could do nothing but sit in the stable and carefully skin hares. Deer and foxes were game rarely found now, so there were only hares passing through his hands. Occasionally he would put down his knife and say to those sitting by his side :

"Such shooting ! How can they be called hunters ! To shoot at the fattest spot—can this be called hunting ? For shame ! To shoot at the hip of the hare. . . . Those who know their business shoot at the legs of hares. Young Lao-san was really, really the master hunter. Hit them without even a blood-stain showing. This easy way of shooting . . ."

Whenever he spoke of Young Lao-san, he could not help stopping for a while. Then he would say :

"I myself almost made up my mind to go with him ! But even the best of marksmen are afraid of being caught. In the year that Young Lao-san ran away to become a bandit I was only twenty-three. It was only a hair's breadth that decided my not going with him, I assure you. But for Fifth Master I should not be in my present condition. Many times I planned to join. But Fifth Master's advice always prevailed : 'It's better to remain a farm-hand even if the wages are low. If you become a bandit you cannot escape being caught and executed in the end.' But for Fifth Master I'm afraid I should long ago have been done for. Ah, yes ! Among the companions of my youth I'm afraid that only Fifth Master and I are still alive. At that time he worked a brewery . . . it has been more than forty years since I last saw him—that old friend. We had been together from our very childhood. . . ."

The more he spoke, the feebler his voice would become. Then Feng Shan would turn against his work impatiently. Cursing the hare in his hand, he would throw it aside defiantly, take a stool with him and go outdoors to smoke his pipe.

The snow might be falling heavily and nothing could be seen, but Feng Shan would still sit out there—one hand alternatively warming in his long felt-boots, while the other held his pipe. An old man driving a cart loaded with logs might say in passing :

"Uncle Feng, in the icy weather, don't you see that you have frost on your beard out here ?"

Feng Shan was very tall and had broad shoulders. When he stood up, his head almost touched the eaves.

When he returned to the stable, he would sit again at his usual place. On his left was a bench on which skinned hares were ranged. On the pegs on the wall at his right, rows of furs hung. As he resumed work he would say nothing, but continue until evening when he lay down heavily on his muddy bed. If someone should ask him on such a night if he wanted a little wine, he would shake his head, not disposed to utter an emphatic "No". And as he shook his head his teeth would tighten in his mouth.

Before the cocks crowed, the hunting dogs were always in the wilderness, with their neck-bells ringing crisply in the frosty morning. The sound became more and more distant, as if it were coming from across villages, then from across forests, and then from across hills. Feng Shan would tug at his beard and, raising his head a little from the pillow, listen to the sound.

"They have gone half a *li*. . . ."

After he had lighted his pipe the sound could still be heard.

"Yea . . . they have passed the Hsu Village. Yea, maybe they are staying at the ford of the White River. Yea . . . Yea . . . the White River. . . ."

He would be trembling then—and draw his hands back into the bed-clothes, the pipe left carelessly lying beside his pillow, smoke and small sparks still issuing from it. Not having been cleaned for many days, the pipe would be hissing a melody. When Feng Shan smoked it with force, it would make a sound like the cooing of the pigeons on the ridge of the roof.

If he awoke when they were ready to start for the hunting, he would say :

"No hurry. Don't forget to take dry cakes with you. Men can sustain hunger for a while, but the dogs cannot. When hungry, they will insist upon food at any time—not caring whether they get the partridges or the hares. Even when a man's belly is empty, he has the perspiration of weakness all over his body. After running a few paces too many, the dogs will not be able to sustain themselves—they will not be able to escape from the wolves. . . ."

If, when he awoke, he could see only the felt-boots left behind by the hunting party and could not even hear the bells, he felt lonely indeed, as if he had been deserted. What thoughts then passed in Feng Shan's mind? Thoughts of far-away places—mountains, rivers, forests . . . firing of guns from ambush . . . Young Lao-san and the many other companions of his youth who did not live long enough to become old hare-skinners in a stable.

"Only Fifth Master is alive of them all . . . to see him again . . . I have never seen him once these forty years. We should not be able to recognise each other at all. . . ."

He would then tug at his beard unconsciously, wipe the tip of his nose,



then his eyes. The pipe accompanying his reverie would threaten to discontinue its hissing song from time to time, as his lower lip softened like cotton and his white beard trembled on the edge of the bedclothes—before he wiped his eyes.

That morning in April, Feng Shan, in pushing open the door of the stable, knocked down with his head some icicles hanging from the eaves. He saw that none of the hunting dogs were chained, but were running about freely on the plain in front of the farmhouse, and that the children were playing there boisterously. He ran toward the plain, slipshod in his indoor felt-boots. He wanted to ask the boys if the report were true that Fifth Master would come, or whether the stable boy was telling a lie.

The White River lay before him. As he crossed it excitedly, he was many times threatened with falling on his knees. The glistening, cracking, broken masses of ice were treacherous for an old hare-skinner.

Coming to the plain, he picked at random one of the boys with a queue. They were playing at throwing coppers on the ground.

"Is Fifth Master coming here? When? Is not the stable-boy telling a lie?"

"See what you have done, Old Uncle Feng! You trampled my boundaries!" A young girl pushed him aside, and hopping with one leg, ran to pick up her copper.

"Go home and ask your mother if and when Fifth Master is to come. Your father is a cart-driver. He always takes the road to Pei-huang. He is sure to know."

As he returned from the plain, he could not help looking to the north now and then. He saw range after range of hills. Beyond the hills he could not see anything. Even if there had been no hills, his old eyes would not have been able to see any farther. But he could imagine very well indeed the road leading to Pei-huang, though it had been many years, scores of years, since he parted with Fifth Master, and he had not since then been to Pei-huang. . . . With the "four-flapped cap" in his hand, his knees always bending forward treacherously, he re-crossed the White River, the ice groaning under his feet.

One windy afternoon, Feng Shan was watching the orange sky. The stable-boy, leading several horses, saw him under the eaves.

"Don't you believe it even yet? Go to the farmhouse and ask. If our Fifth Master doesn't arrive at noon to-morrow he will surely come at supper-time." The boy waved his right hand gaily. This audacious gesture from the rider on his precarious perch, made Feng Shan feel that something was breaking in his heart. Young Lao-san had been like that—riding off carelessly and gaily, never to return. . . .

"You little liar, are you not deceiving me? You little devil! I cannot always be sure of what you say." Feng Shan went toward the gate, still mumbling: "You mischievous boy, a young liar. . . . How

can Fifth Master come? He is an old man of sixty . . . it's not easy for him to be out. . . ." He looked back and saw that the stable boy was cantering away without turning his head.

Then Feng Shan himself began to run: "Can it be true? Will he come to-morrow?" The harder he tried to run, the more forcefully the wind checked the movement of his old knees.

The first one he asked was the Young Master, who said: "Yes, he will come."

He then went to ask the old man whose business it was to clean the house of dirt and rubbish. He received the same answer.

Feng Shan was still sceptical: "They are making fun of me," he thought. Then he went to ask the plow-driver:

"Shantung<sup>1</sup> Li! I say! . . . Is the Fifth Master coming? Can it be true? Did you hear our Old Mistress say so?"

"I, Shantung, don't know that." He was sweeping the dust of rotten grass from his plow with a big, broad broom, setting it flying into the air.

Feng Shan thought to himself: "Maybe the plow-driver is going to town." He left him, however, without asking. He meant to ask the crowd of men who were watering their horses at the well, but while he walked toward them, he heard the cook Feng calling to him from somewhere:

"Old Feng Shan, Old Feng! Your ooo-ld friend will come to-mo-rrorrow!"

Feng Shan turned back and came out from the herd of horses, which he thought seemed also to be checking his way.

"Then it is true, Cook Feng? Has the messenger come?"

"Yes, he's taking lunch in the hall."

Feng Shan lingered at the door of the kitchen, his pipe in his tobacco-bag. He offered the cook a smoke, for the cook's overgrown moustache looked grave indeed. It could not be hiding a smile.

"This is an honest man, not making fun for no good reason. . . ." Feng Shan struck a match, then another.

A casement on the kitchen wall fell with a crash; then they went into the kitchen, seating themselves on the stool by the wall. As he was beginning to ask Cook Feng whether Fifth Master were going to spend the night on the east or the west side of the river, he heard someone calling from the door of the hall.

"Cook Feng, come and warm the wine," the voice said.

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Feng Shan tried to stand in front of the children so that they could

<sup>1</sup> This nickname derives from the fact that the plow-driver emigrated to Manchuria from Shantung Province. Farmers from all parts of China go to the Manchurian frontier lands.

not see that his beard quivered. He kept raising his right hand to his eyebrow, as if looking at the distance.

It was noon. The women and children of the Master's house were all standing on a mound, below which the road ran. Once a carriage or a horse had turned down the pass of the hill beyond, it arrived at the foot of the mound within half a *li*'s walking. They were all watching the shining road at the pass. Feng Shan himself looked now at the pass and then at the sun, wiping the tears that flowed—because of the sun, of course. When the sun neared the top of the hill, it reddened and became larger, until it lay on the head of the hill like a large bowl. Whenever Feng Shan looked up, he held one end of his waist-cloth to his eyes. The children said :

“ Old Feng is crying ! See, he is crying. . . . ”

He hastened to let down his waist-cloth to show them that he was not weeping, but only that his eyes had become dimmed.

Two carriages and a riding horse appeared at the hill pass.

“ He is coming ! . . . a black riding horse. . . . ”

“ So he is. Was it not two carriages that went to meet him ? ”

“ Yes, yes. ”

Some of the children ran along the road to meet the coming party. Feng Shan's white beard glistened in the sunlight as if it were mixed with silver threads. He supported himself on the shoulders of the children, as if trying to heighten his stature.

“ Where are they now ? Where . . . ? ” someone asked.

“ Past the bridge at the Taiping Valley. ”

“ No, isn't there a row of shrubbery ? Isn't Ching-chia Mound behind the shrubbery ? Ching-chia Mound is on this side of the bridge. ”

“ It takes less than the time of smoking two full pipes of tobacco to come from Ching-chia Mound. ”

One could see that the man riding the black horse had an earthen-brown hood on his head and that the horse was moving ahead of the party. The ringing of the bells on the horse's neck could soon be heard. Feng Shan held up both his hands to shelter his eyes. . . .

When he saw the string of brass bells around the neck of the horse his old eyes became dimmed and he could not make out that the man on horseback was the companion of his youth.

He took one step, and then another. Then he went down from the Mound. He walked over and took hold of the bridle of the horse, mumbling, “ My master. . . . ” Then he said nothing more.

Holding each others' hands, Feng Shan and the children accompanied Fifth Master into the hall. During the feasting, he seated himself opposite Fifth Master. They talked of the probable date of the death of Young Lao-san . . . and of Chang Kuo-kuang and the others who died that way . . . of all the companions of their youth.

When he became a little drunk, Feng Shan meant to tell Fifth Master how in a certain year he had got himself into the favour of a widow. Seeing that the women and children were standing about, however, he decided to forgo this. . . .

On the evening that Fifth Master went away to Pei-huang, Feng Shan seemed to remember only the red saddle, the earthen-brown hood. The man did not seem real.

Though the wind was howling wildly in the field that night, the smell peculiar to the stable was still there. Yet Feng Shan seemed to have lost himself when hunting in the wilderness in his youth. And Young Lao-san seemed very real. . . . Young Lao-san, the bandit, who did not live to become an old hare-skinner. . . .

When the stable boy came to feed the horses, he shouted to him .

“ Warm two cups of wine for old Feng ! ”

*(Translated by Chia Wu and Nym Wales.)*

# ONE MAN IN HIS TIME

By NORAH HOULT

THE SOUND OF the approaching train brings me out of the waiting-room on to the open platform. The rain is coming down heavily, and I tuck in my head as I look along the line of carriages. At one of the windows Mr. Fitzgerald-Waters' face appears, and I run quickly towards his carriage. As I answer his greetings, I realize that this is a first-class carriage, and that I have bought a third-class ticket. I should have connected him with first-class carriages, I think, as my glance goes from his formal though unnoticeable clothes down to his spats, and then along the seat which contains both the dignified Sunday papers. As he helps me off with my mackintosh a faintly scented odour reaches my nostrils—soap, shaving cream, talcum powder? I sit down removing my hat and feeling my hair, wet with rain.

His smooth deliberate voice compliments me on my courage in venturing out. He draws up the window. I am lulled by that voice which is now congratulating himself on having started just in time to escape the downpour. He gives me assurance against any future discomfort. The hotel at which we will take luncheon adjoins the station. At two-thirty the taxi which will take us to the sanatorium will be outside. We will be given tea at the hospital . . . they serve it quite daintily to special visitors. . . .

I feel that the rain is a far-off thing. Soothed, protected, complaisant, taking unto myself the grateful bearing of the escorted, I ask :

"How is your brother?"

"Better, much better. He recovered marvellously from the last hæmorrhage, marvellously."

"I am so glad."

Perhaps his brother is not dying as they had told me. Not, at least, for a long while. But a shade has passed over his face as if a blind has been drawn. As I listen to what he is saying about his sick brother, I sit more stiffly as in the presence of serious things. Once more I hear the patter of rain outside. A pause. Change the subject. I hear my voice saying :

"By the way, I got a third-class ticket, I'm afraid."

"It doesn't matter; it won't matter. The ticket collector has been. He won't come again before we get out."

A strict social conscience would decree that the difference shall be paid at the station. In spite of his spats he has no objection to cheating the railway company.

Against my blankness he murmurs, "It is only a matter of a few coppers, but . . ."

He shrugs his shoulders, and speaks of another matter. If at the station I take out my own bag and pay the difference, I shall be administering a rebuke, creating an embarrassment; he would have to pay. I reply with animation, tacitly agreeing to shelve the point of third-class versus first-class.

I pass through the barrier first. The collector takes my ticket indifferently; his head is turned in respectful recognition towards Mr. Fitzgerald-Waters.

"Nasty morning, Sir."

"Shocking, shocking."

Speaking querulously, rapidly, as if half to himself and half to one who is not his social equal. He is putting up his umbrella, holding it half over me.

"You didn't bring an umbrella?"

There seems a note of criticism in his voice.

"I haven't got such a thing. Not for years. You see, I lost so many that . . ."

My voice falters and stops before the veneer of a half-listening disapprobation. Once inside the big almost deserted hotel with its waiting-for-Sunday-dinner atmosphere, we escape from each other, released by a murmur about washing hands. I linger before the mirror in the ladies' cloakroom, wondering if it has been a mistake to come. My interior self is dull, inclining its head neither way.

Waiting for the announcement that lunch is served, we sip sherry before a blazing fire. Warmed, stimulated, remarks broaden into conversation. We discuss mutual acquaintances; sometimes I find myself in agreement with his diagnosis, I incline to think he is intelligent. When we differ in one instance, he congratulates me approvingly on my loyalty.

We go into the dining-room. The soup comes quickly and is good and hot. Laying down my spoon and inwardly as well as outwardly approving his choice of wine, I turn the conversation towards the shifting value of pictures, for he has the reputation of being a connoisseur. I listen with deference to his views.

Without warning out of the calm breaks the squall. The roast beef with its accompaniment of horse-radish sauce on the same plate appears before us. Looking up from my plate I see he is frowning.

"Waiter!"

"Yes, Sir."

Back comes the waiter, his face sharing the alacrity of his movements.

"What is this, tell me?"

"Horse-radish sauce, Sir."

"Take it away."

"Don't you like it, Sir?"

"Would I say 'take it away' if I liked it?"

The voice has a sudden note of savagery in it. I see the waiter flush as he removes the plate. Someone at the next table turns to stare.

I look down feeling anger stirring, creeping in a hot wave of distaste up my spine.

"Do you like that stuff? It will spoil your palate for the wine."

"It's all right, thanks."

My voice sounds flat, remote. I help myself to salt. Anger must be stopped from going to my head and betraying itself. He is my host. But never never can I like anyone who bullies a waiter or anyone in an inferior position. Sympathy, willingness, met by a snub, an overheard snub. An offence against life. I drink some wine so that my expostulation shall be heard only by myself.

"Talking of Rembrandt, there is a very curious story which you may not have heard . . ."

I listen attentively. The stream is running again.

The waiter comes to say that the taxi has arrived, but we linger over our coffee. Mr. Fitzgerald-Waters takes out a cigar.

"It is a mistake I always find, to move immediately after eating," he informs me.

As the cab runs gently, smoothly over the wet country roads, I see his head tilt forward on his chest. He looks up, but I am staring out of the window, and do not break the silence. Now his eyes are closed. He is asleep.

What is he now? A middle-aged man having a snooze after his Sunday dinner. I see he is inclined to be corpulent. Like all those who are off their guard there is something pathetic about him. I remember one of his remarks :

"I preserve my vitality and something of my youth, I believe, by staying in bed all day on Saturday. I do nothing, absolutely nothing. . . ."

Accustoming himself somewhat, maybe, to the long sleep of the tomb? I avert my eyes. Since he is asleep I must not consider his unwarranted rebuke to the waiter. I remind myself that he goes to see his sick brother every Sunday. Wet or fine he never misses. I remember that he has given me a good lunch. I feel a little sleepy myself as I watch the trees and fields going past. It has stopped raining, but the sky is grey.

He awakes, rouses himself, and looks out of the window. "We are nearly there," he says, and starts to collect parcels and papers, showing me the things he has brought his brother with a simplicity that moves my heart.

Now we sit in a little bedroom with its glass doors open to the hills. I know the man in the bed is dying, though he talks loudly and tells us of the weight he has put on during the week. He knows he is dying, but his eyes carry the knowledge as a dark stress, and he turns away

from the realisation, and swallows reassurance when I tell him that I had expected to find an invalid but he does not look at all like that. He goes on talking to me, about wireless programmes ; he is full of criticism, full of ideas. He does lots of crossword puzzles. He is showing off to me, showing off his vitality. . . .

Mr. Fitzgerald-Waters is suddenly a different, very quiet person. A nurse comes in, and he stands up and speaks to her with deference. He sits back again almost crouchingly on his chair and watches the dying man. I realise that he loves his brother. Now I listen, half listen, to them talking business, and think as I look out at the hills, death is walking up and down, stalking round this sanatorium, so that life has turned into a dream in defence. To myself I feel unreal. A thickness comes over my head ; and my lips smile stiffly.

I am glad to be inside the cab going away from the hospital. The sky is pale blue now, and the washed countryside smells sweetly. I warmly agree with what my companion is saying.

"Yes, he is wonderful. All that vitality ! That interest in things !"  
(If a man who won a prize in a competition dies before they pay, will his wife and family get the money ?)

"Sometimes I think . . . perhaps, perhaps he will recover yet. It's a good sign his putting on weight."

"Perhaps he will. He certainly looks well." (He won't. I saw death in his eyes and glancing on his cheek-bones.)

"He's always had a wonderful constitution, wonderful."

"I can see you are very fond of him," I say suddenly, looking towards him with pleasure at the thought.

"I am, of course. Yes." He is slightly surprised. He adds, "He is very fond of me, too. Very fond of me."

Why is he defensive ? Why does he grudge giving without receiving ?

"Yes, of course."

We change the conversation. We talk about books. He tells me that the only novels which matter now are the proletarian novels. I find he is ardent for Communism, for the Brotherhood of Man ; when he mentions Russia, the familiar deep note of one who is talking of exalted matters comes into his voice. I find myself argumentative, then unresponsive.

He says in a complaining voice, "You are young ; you should take more interest in economics. After all, when we look at the terrible state of the world to-day, there is surely nothing else that compares in importance to finding a remedy. . . ."

I feel ashamed, discomfited. I defend myself.

"When I was young I used to . . . I believed, I still do, in the Douglas Scheme, in Social Credit . . ."

"That won't work. Listen . . ."

I listen. I find I have forgotten the answers to what he is saying.



He quotes me facts and figures, figures and facts. I bow my head before my inferiority. Yes, I should know more. I steal a glance outside. The trees stand bare and beautiful against the coming dusk : the countryside stretches away like a benison of peace.

"I must send you that book ; it is really remarkable."

"Thank you very much. I should like to read it." I don't want to read it. But he is kind. Kind and enthusiastic. He likes many things : Soviet Russia, good food, his poor brother. . . .

The taxi stops. We get out. Mr. Fitzgerald-Waters pays the driver. I see by the man's face, resigned and polite, that he is getting his due, no more, no less.

Now it is my turn to say "good-bye." His train is waiting. It does not stop at my station. I must wait for the slower one.

"And thank you so much for bringing me."

"It has been very pleasant."

He bows in a very courtly way as he gets into his first-class carriage. I stand watching the train move out. I ask myself if I like him. I do not find any answer. He is so many different things. He confuses me. One impression overlies another impression. It is not easy, I think, disheartened, to think or say anything about people at all, to know whether one likes or dislikes. I feel tired and a little depressed as I get into my train.

# THE HANGING OF THE MOUSE

By ELIZABETH BISHOP

EARLY, EARLY IN the morning, even before five o'clock, the mouse was brought out, but already there were large crowds. Some of the animals had not gone to bed the night before, but had stayed up later and later ; at first because of a vague feeling of celebration, and then, after deciding several times that they might as well wander about the town for an hour more, to conclude the night by arriving at the square in time for the hanging became only sensible. These animals hiccupped a little and had an air of cynical lassitude. Those who had got up out of bed to come also appeared weary and silent, but not so bored.

The mouse was led in by two enormous brown beetles in the traditional picturesque armour of an earlier day. They came on to the square through the small black door and marched between the lines of soldiers standing at attention : straight ahead, to the right, around two sides of the hollow square, to the left, and out into the middle where the gallows stood. Before each turn the beetle on the right glanced quickly at the beetle on the left ; their traditional long, long antennæ swerved sharply in the direction they were to turn and they did it to perfection. The mouse, of course, who had had no military training and who, at the moment, was crying so hard he could scarcely see where he was going, rather spoiled the precision and snap of the beetles. At each corner he fell slightly forward, and when he was jerked in the right direction his feet became tangled together. The beetles, however, without even looking at him, each time would lift him quickly into the air for a second until his feet were untangled.

At that hour in the morning the mouse's gray clothes were almost indistinguishable from the light. But his whimpering could be heard, and the end of his nose was rose-red from crying so much. The crowd of small animals tipped back their heads and sniffed with pleasure.

A raccoon, wearing the traditional black mask, was the executioner. He was very fastidious and did everything just so. One of his young sons, also wearing a black mask, waited on him with a small basin and a pitcher of water. First he washed his hands and rinsed them carefully ; then he washed the rope and rinsed it. At the last minute he again washed his hands and drew on a pair of elegant black kid gloves.

A large praying mantis was in charge of the religious end of the ceremonies. He hurried up on the staging after the mouse and his escorts, but once there a fit of nerves seemed to seize him. He glided to the left a few steps, to the right a few steps, lifted his arms gracefully, but could not seem to begin ; and it was quite apparent that he would have liked nothing better than to have jumped quickly down and left the whole affair. When his arms were stretched to heaven his large eyes

flashed towards the crowd, and when he looked up, his body was twitching and he moved about in a really pathetic way. He seemed to feel ill at ease with the low characters around him : the beetles, the hangmen, and the criminal mouse. At last he made a great effort to pull himself together and, approaching the mouse, said a few words in a high, incomprehensible voice. The mouse jumped from nervousness, and cried harder than ever.

At this point the spectators would all undoubtedly have burst out laughing, but just then the King's messenger appeared on the balcony above the small black door the mouse and his guards had lately come through. He was a very large, overweight bull-frog, also dressed in the traditional costume and carrying the traditional long scroll that dragged for several feet on the ground and had the real speech, on a little slip of paper, pasted inside it. The scroll and the white plume on his hat made him look comically like something in a nursery tale, but his voice was impressive enough to awe the crowd into polite attention. It was a deep bass : " Glug ! Glug ! Berrr-up ! " No one could understand a word of the mouse's death sentence.

With the help of some pushes and pinches from the beetles, the executioner got the mouse into position. The rope was tied exquisitely behind one of his little round ears. The mouse raised a hand and wiped his nose with it, and most of the crowd interpreted this gesture as a farewell wave and spoke of it for weeks afterwards. The hangman's young son, at a signal from his father, sprang the trap.

" Squee-eek ! Squee-eek ! " went the mouse.

His whiskers rowed hopelessly round and round in the air a few times and his feet flew up and curled into little balls like young fern-plants.

The praying mantis, with an hysterical fling of his long limbs, had disappeared in the crowd. It was all so touching that a cat, who had brought her child in her mouth, shed several large tears. They rolled down on to the child's back and he began to squirm and shriek, so that the mother thought that the sight of the hanging had perhaps been too much for him, but an excellent moral lesson, nevertheless.

## A NIGHT OUT

By RANDALL SWINGLER

THE MOTHER WAS dying. The children did not know it, but it was there, in their feeling. The whole house was full of it. Its four rooms were so small that it was impossible for them to get away from the fact of their mother dying. Tom Mackle knew the inevitability of death when he looked at her face in the morning, but he went to work just the same. All day hoeing the sullen rows of turnips he rejected the knowledge. It was not, could not be, the emotion of personal loss that overwhelmed him, but the blank weight of the future into which he dare not look, a future with the four children on his hands, the empty crumbling cottage on the edge of the hill, lost up a lane that had no ending but petered out like a wisp of train smoke in a stony field. Tom Mackle was a lonely taciturn man. He lived so far from his fellows that he had forgotten the knack of communication. His job was so occasional and so precarious that he had no natural mates. In a dull unformulated way he and men and the weather and the flinty soil were at odds. He fought on in a dumb zestless obstinacy. His satisfactions were so small and so habitual that they were never things consciously desired, but things which recurred, mechanical reactions, like the straightening of the back and scratching of the stubbly scalp at intervals along the turnip rows. In the morning he knew that his wife would probably be dead before evening, but his dumbness came up like a wall against the future, and he put a cup of tea which she never saw beside the bed, and went out to work.

In the evening he climbed the pale rutty lane with a quart bottle of beer heavy in each pocket of his jacket. He walked with a heavy shuffling trudge, his feet swinging like dull mechanical hammers, and his small eyes blinked at the stones. At the corner of the copse the lane took a turn more directly up hill. A few pigeons were already beginning to return into the tops of the larches from the fields where they had been picking. Behind him stretched out the whole shallow valley, hazy with early evening. Its fields were wide and level and lay in alternating reaches of pale green and rich maternal brown. Trees clustered together like flax on a distaff and among them the mouse-coloured houses cautiously appeared. The innumerable streams which kept the grass so sweet, hustled down this hill-side to join the vigorous current of the Wissen at the bottom, to send it stumbling and hurrying through the little town. From this corner of the copse, it looked only innocent and mousey in the wide open calyx of the valley, with its gathered trees like columns of dark smoke horizontal along the ground. But near at hand, close as life, it was dirty and airless and neglected,

a huddle of disease and degradation and squalor. Travellers in big cars along the highroad which topped the opposite ridge, would pause and gaze down at its softened grey subjection to the hills, like a crouching rabbit, and catch their breath with a pathetic moment of poignant nostalgia. But they never came closer than that. Never savoured its odours nor ran their fingers along the walls that held the moisture like a sponge.

Tom Mackle never paused or turned to admire the melting beauty of this landscape. He never noticed the hares get up from the steep furrows and gallop away to the south with their buttocks high in the air and their ears pricked sharply. The stinging call of the yellow-hammers that escorted him all the time down the hedge, never impinged on his hearing. But as he climbed, a heavy reluctance like a lunar attraction began to drag at him, and at last there was a place where he paused.

Tucked into the side of the hill, so closely that it looked as if one could walk straight from the sloping turf on to the roof of the dutch barn, was a farm. The farmhouse, unusually large and gaunt-looking with its bone-grey stone and curtainless windows, stood under the hill next the barn, and the low cowhouses enclosed the square yard on two sides like cloisters. The hay was stacked in tawny blocks and the fowls clucked lazily about the rusty reaper and elevator that seemed to have had their day. Just inside the yard gate, in a little enclosure of hurdles, four or five black hornless steers nosed and rubbed knee-deep in the dungy straw. As Tom Mackle heaved up to the gate, they looked up at him with a peculiar glazed intentness, breathing hotly through red nostrils. The swallows shot out from under the eaves of the barn and skimmed and skidded in the thickening twilight, weaving patterns all over the yard and over the roof and back again into the eaves. Tom leaned his elbows on the top rung of the gate and stared at the cattle's bluish hazy eyes. There was a clang of a bucket from the cowhouse, and a brown shadowy figure backed out of one of the doors. As he closed it carefully behind him, the bull shifted its chain in the darkness of the byre and yawned with a deep bored sound of frustrated heaviness. Nat, the cowman, saw Tom leaning on the gate, and nodded solemnly. Then he came across the yard, with one hand in his pocket and his eyes fixed intently on the moveless cattle. He leaned on the other side of the gate and still did not look in Tom's direction. Both men were silent for a bit. Nat was a long lean fellow with stooping shoulders and a long head. His legs were permanently bent at the knee and his round chin was grizzly with a harsh growth of beard. His lips were shut so tight that they seemed to be pinned together and his eyes in their narrow sloping sockets were red and open like defiance.

"Hear your missus is took bad," he said at last, pushing back the shapeless hat that covered his knobbly head.

"Aye, that's so," said Tom, gazing fixedly at the cattle. He was savouring the strong tang of manure from the yard.

"'Ad the doctor to 'er?" asked Nat cautiously.

"Aye, 'e bin to 'er." Which wasn't true. "'Adn't done no good."

There was another strained ruminant silence. The bull shifted his chain and yawned again. Nat drew a breath.

"It's solitary for a woman oop at your place when she's took bad," he said.

"Aye."

"Reckon you don't see nobody up their from one week's end ter the next."

Tom didn't answer, but only shook his head. Nat glanced curiously at the side of his head. There was nothing you could do with Tom, he decided. After another pause, he straightened himself and picked up his bucket.

"Well, I must be gettin' along I spose.—An' I 'ope things takes a turn fer the better."

Tom gave him a sideways jerk of the head, and gazed after his stooping figure as it skirted the yard. When he got inside the house, Nat told Mrs. Henderson about Tom's wife being took bad. "I don't like the look of Tom," he said, "I reckon 'e don't know what 'uman illness is." But the farmer's wife was a bitter savage woman, who on this occasion was pleased to mind her own business. She snorted and sharpened her nose at him.

"I don't suppose it's anything," she snapped, "Tom's just out for what he can get. Well, he won't get anything out of me, that's sure enough." And she slammed the milk-can down on the kitchen table.

At last Tom knew that he could delay by the gate no longer. The dusk had grown very thick, and made all sight fallacious when he turned to climb the lane. When he had passed the little stacks in the field on his left, there was a rustle in the straw, and one by one, with the intent caution of animals, the children dropped to the ground, three of them, a boy and two little girls. Silent, with big eyes fixed on their father's back as if mesmerized, they followed him with stumbling footsteps. Alfred went first, glancing round every now and again to make sure the other two were following. Emmie, who was only four, clung close to her sister Alice, and never took her left fist out of her mouth. She was half insensible with weariness and fear.

The children had not been into the house all day. Its inactivity, and the mumbling voice of their mother trickling through the warped planks of the upper floor, terrified them. They had eaten nothing but berries picked indiscriminately from the hedges and grasses they had found to chew. They had wandered all day about the fields as wild as rabbits, and finally when the sun began to sink, had hidden

themselves in the straw stacks across the road from the farm, to wait for their father.

Tom Mackle never looked behind him, never paused in his slow shuffling climb. He reached the house, which stood back on the edge of pasture, on the right of the track. He pushed open the gate, slanting on one hinge. A patch of potatoes showed orderly out of the nettles and rubbish in front of the house, like a darn in a sock. The thatch was untidy as a magpie's nest. Tom went straight up to the door which stood open. He went in, his boots suddenly clanging on the flags. There was no sound in the house. He thought his wife was dead, but she wasn't. He drew the two bottles of beer heavily from his pockets and planked them down on the table. Old newspapers scattered with breadcrumbs were spread all over it. The children hovered round the door, quiet as shadows, little vague things. Their eyes were round and blank and never left him. Tom didn't seem to have noticed them at all. He stood a minute gazing at the bottles on the table, then turned and stumped heavily up the wooden stairs. The woman lying on the bed did not move or turn when he came in, but she started to mutter again, her voice quavering up and down like a piece of paper in the wind, and he knew that she had not died yet. Her face and throat were quite grey, and all that could be seen of them in the dark room were the sharp straight downward lines, the indistinct chasm of the mouth, and the shining senselessness of the two eyes. It was a face drained of all meaning, a face already dead, only the scolding mechanical mutter would go on, dribbling out of the mouth, and the fingers feebly clutching on the quilt.

Tom Mackle stood by the door and looked down at her until he did not see her any more. Then he went down again to the kitchen. While he was gone, the children had darted in and snatched at the crumbs on the table. When he came to the foot of the stairs he could see them dimly along the walls, alert, watching. He took two steps into the room. Then, as if something were released in him forcibly, he began to roar at them. They still held themselves alert and big-eyed and silent, waiting for the next manifestation. Tom stood by the table and roared and swayed his body about. He came slowly round the table, and they huddled away from him.

"Get off to bed with you, you little vermin, you little ratspawn—" he was roaring all the time. "What're you doin' cringin' aroun' me? Get away with you, get out o' my sight, get out, get out—!"

He was lumbering unsteadily round the table, his feet scraping sparks on the flagged floor. He took up one bottle by the neck and brandished it awkwardly. Then, when the children, backing away from him, came opposite the pale opening of the door, Alfred, quick and cunning, nipped out into the dim evening and the girls huddled after him. A swinging boot caught Emmie as she slipped round the doorpost, and with an eery rabbit-scream she fell among the potatoes.

Alice dragged her with her feet trailing out into the road, where the little group stopped and looked at each other's pale floating faces, and struggled to damp down the hurrying of their hearts.

Between ten and eleven that night, it was Stevey Layo coming up the lane. Stevey was putting in a day or two with his broomsticks among the valley villages before joining up with his people again on the Cheltenham road. Stevey's eyes slanted in a sly unsmiling way, and his face was very small. His step now was quiet and elastic and there was a swing to his walk. It was clear he had never worked on the land. The hedges were iron-grey on either side of him, extraordinarily still, like embalmed things. Fields of young corn stretched pale and glossy beyond them, great wide fields expanding over the hill-side whose rim was faint against the ringing dark blue sky. He was alone in the clear dark. Solitude made the night close about him in a completed sphere, enveloping him in its singularity, his own private world. Stevey Layo was a man so secret, so locked up in himself, that he did not know his own feeling. There was himself, with his soft furtive compact tread, and there was the world, with its million and one alien ways.

He passed the farm and heard the long clank of a chain halter and a heifer's groan, almost tonelessly low. Dark shadows of rats scattered stealthily from the midden as his step clacked on the stones, and the farm cat, a more pallid shadow, half wild with starvation, hissed and sprang softly from the steps to the loft where the hay was chopped. The carts looked gaunt and dead, like trussed fowls, with their thin shafts stretching up to the roof of the barn. The air was thick with a mixture of oil and ammonia and dank moist earth and hay. Along the fence sinister banks of nettles bristled, their coarse and savage leaves unnaturally still in the grey night. The old collie began to bark out a hopeless melancholy alarm. It thudded and thudded on the night like a non-resonant bell. The place was desolate, absolutely far from any comradeship, any attention of the world. In the dead moonlight the buildings themselves were huge and bare and unfriendly, the trees and the whole yard dry and colourless and unresponsive as bones. Stevey began to smile, a curling nervous motion beginning from the left nostril. All he felt was a trickle of cold inside his coat, but he began to quicken his step forward. From the stacked straw on the right of the road, came a quick and furtive twitch of movement that caught his ear. It would be a rat, or a broody fowl that they had failed to find. At the thought of a fowl, he paused : and it came again, but this time growing into a sliding rustle so that he was locked immobile, peering in that direction. There was a dim tangle of movement under the pile of straw. After a while he detached from the twitching of the straw another sound, a thin hoarse voice, almost a whisper.

"Hai, hai, 'ullo," it said. Then there was convulsive stirring in the



straw. Stevey took two steps in the direction of the stack. Looking down, he saw the small blurred shape of Alfred crouching among the husky stalks and squinting up at him with a grin half fearful and half cunning. Above him a smaller bunch of shadows began to shift downwards, and big shrinking doubtful eyes looked up at Stevey from a tiny narrow face round which the hair was matted as dirty and lank and colourless as the straw. Stevey recognized the children from the cottage up the lane, and he dropped down on to his haunches to question them.

"What doin' art heer then?" His voice was curiously soft and mocking. Alf's pointed squinty eyes began to swerve from one side of his face to the other.

"Eh, we daren't goo in," he croaked. "Our dad'll get us. 'E near got our Emmie."

"Wha' did'ye do?"

"Aw, nothin'. 'E's drinkin'. Our Ma's took bad."

Stevy was silent a minute, looking at them through his sharp slanting eyes and his soft mocking smile. Alf never took his eyes off him, desperately trying to scrutinize his intention. Suddenly he became suspicious.

"We're not goin' back in," he grunted.

Stevy laughed with very white teeth, and straightened up with the smoothness of a blade of grass.

"C'm on," he said, "We'll go and see."

When they reached the cottage, Stevey slipped across the potato patch and peered in at the window. At first he could see nothing but the viscous surface of the glass. Then the dimness of the room began to impress itself upon him in different grades of light. It seemed to be choked with broken furniture, and the loosened figure of Tom Mackle slouched sideways in a chair before the table, looked like a fallen statue among the ruins. His back was to the window and the dark hunch of it held all the baffled cruelty of the solitary man, maddened by his solitude. The bottle on the table in front of him drew into its reflection a thin line of jeering light. His long head swayed apishly from side to side and he was grunting and mumbling to himself.

Stevy stared in intently, his face near to the glass, till he had furred it with his breath. Then he went back to the children in the lane.

"Wotcher goin' ter do?"

Young Alf screwed his toe into the mud.

"We're not goin' back in."

Stevy jerked his head up the hill.

"Better coom oop wi' me," he said indifferently to the lucid night. Alf looked up at him and grinned slyly.

"Awright," he said, and turned to his sister who was sucking her sleeve and gaping upwards with stupified eyes.

"Come on," said Alf.

Stevey set off up the hill with the three children trotting behind, quite silent. Emmie was breathless with the terror of stumbling and being left behind. Alf was mingled excitement and caution. He had no reason to trust the friendliness of an adult. Every now and then he would turn round and whisper hoarsely, "Come on," to the two little girls. That increased his confidence, assuring him that at any rate he was not alone.

They passed along the edge of a black copse where the pigeons went clapping out of the branches with a furious blundering noise in the still night, that terrified the children. Then along a field of turnips whose leaves were all glossy and metallic in the moonlight. A young hare spurting up almost under Alf's feet made him grunt and swear with fright. But Stevey kept his even springing pace and they stuck tremulously to his heels.

On the other side of the hedge a young cart-horse started with all his four feet and drummed away across the field, making the earth bound and boom appallingly under their feet, and the air shivered with the snorts of his shivering nostrils. Stevey was locked in himself; indifferent to all these things. But the huge unseen shape of the horse with its drumming hoofs, loomed upon the children in the darkness, and they stumbled closer on his heels with a gasping in their throats. Then all of a sudden they themselves were thumping into the bottom of a ditch and scrambling up the other side through the clinging of brambles and the wet lick of grasses and campions. Their feet and calves were drenched as they waded through the long weeds at the fringe of a field of young wheat. At last they came to a wall, so broken down that its stones seemed fortuitously thrown together. Jumping down from the rocking stone at the top, they landed on a springy surface of pine needles, scrawled here and there with low brambles which caught at the ankles and sent them stumbling and gasping against each other. They were within a little group of beech and pine trees which stood like a coronet on the ridge above the farm, surrounded by the wall. In the very centre of the ring was a large smooth bole at whose foot Stevey had built his gipsy hide. The children, wandering in the daytime, had seen it before, a cone-shaped structure, constructed by leaning branches at an angle against the trunk and laying withies horizontally across them, then coating the whole with a thick thatch of bracken and leaves and moss. The interior was heaped with heather, and its whole furniture consisted of two tins and an old horse blanket.

It was warm inside and the soft darkness smelt strong of animal odours and dry vegetation. It was comforting to crawl in and be very close packed after that terrifying and desperate journey. The children were happy and excited all at once. They had never entered this tent before, for all their playing round it. Some superstitious dread had

warned them from the doorway. They expected some mysterious guardian to be crouched in the shadow within, when Stevey was far away, hawking his broomsticks from door to door. But now, under Stevey's protecting presence, Alf was excited by the rebellious game. He was going to be like Stevey, a rebel, himself against all the world, living in the woods, no man's servant, far from his father's bullying. Stevey left them curled up like rabbits in a nest of heather, and wandered away to sit on the stone wall and gaze down into the blue monotony of the plain. Behind him the hoarse whispering of Alf teasing his sisters scratched on the night, and their answering giggle or whine, "O shuttup, Alfie." But they soon grew faint and ceased.

Dully, in his curious tight consciousness, he was feeling a longing towards his own people. Even these children brought up a picture of himself lonely and lost, from birth to death a drifter on the face of the world, always locked tightly in himself, in his strange vagabond pride. Uncomfortable, he curled his lips and spat. The fringes of the sky were brilliantly luminous. A thin breeze blew away the fulness of the night and gave a more articulate but ghastly shape to trees and the contours of the hills. The cold entered him and took the strength out of his limbs. He was tired and felt himself depressed. He stretched his arms above him, and brought them to rest behind his head, feeling along the muscles of his back the wrinkled trunk against which he was leaning. The stones began to obtrude awkwardly into his flesh. He slid off the wall, and strolled towards the brushwood tent, dejected with sleep.

In the cottage on the side of the hill, where Tom Mackle now slept stertorously across the kitchen table, the mother with a sudden convulsive strength, lifted herself off the bed, and staggering stiffly in her long blue dressing gown with the faded red sleeves, she fell to her knees at the window, clawing at the sill, meaning to pray. Her grey colourless hair straggled down her back, and her empty face was streaked like her hair. Kneeling there, with death hovering like a vapour over all her limbs, the strength and will-power leaked out from her decayed and senseless frame into the shapeless night air. She felt herself drawn up as it were under two immense black wings, and the power went out of her suddenly like escaping breath, and a great faintness seized her, with a sharp pain in the head.

And so the mother died, while the children slept in the wood.

## A DATE WITH A DUCHESS

By ARTHUR CALDER-MARSHALL

YOU COULDN'T CALL Glad's marriage to Les a love match. At least Glad couldn't. That was her point of pride. She might do things she didn't really approve of, but she didn't kid herself.

This is how the marriage happened.

About four years before, when she was working at the cash desk in the restaurant, Les Stevens came to the Royal Albert as boots. The Royal Albert's a big commercial in Sheffield, which fills up weekdays and then on Sundays it's empty, except perhaps a table or two for parties coming in from outside. It's all cheerio, away as soon as you've got there, and see you again next month. That's how it is with buyers and travellers all the world over.

Glad didn't take any notice of Stevens, of course. And *he* wasn't one to get uppish. He kept himself to himself. He was quiet spoken and willing, rather old for a boots.

Then one day, he hadn't been in the Royal a couple of months, he came into the restaurant at lunch-time with his tails on. He'd served once or twice before, when the Masons or the Elks had a big do. The boss had spotted him, and put him on to regular waiting.

That was when Glad first really noticed him. He wasn't like the rest. He was educated. He spoke to her like a gentleman should, none of your kidding, none of your backchat. Oh no, not Les Stevens.

The boss liked Les. He said to Glad, "You mark Les, he's one in a hundred. Got a flair for the hotel business. You can't get nowhere in the hotel business without flair. Mark Les."

One evening, when their nights off coincided, Les asked her to go out to a Variety with him. And she accepted. Variety always excited her, because all her folk had been in the show business and as a kid she'd travelled round with them from town to town. She was on the stage herself till she was seventeen and then she gave it up. She couldn't stand it, the shiftlessness, the anxiety, the continual drain on nerves before every performance. She told Les about this, and how she loved security and yet, when she went into a theatre, all the excitement and romance came back and she forgot about theatrical lodging houses and squabbling and debt, and just wanted lights and callboys and the smell of greasepaint.

Les was surprised when she said she'd been on the stage, because she didn't look that sort. There was nothing showy about her, nothing common or affected. She was quiet-looking, slender in the body, with a face that sometimes looked pretty. But she had bad blood, which came out now and again in boils on her face. Nobody could say she was a beauty then.

Les told her she wasn't the theatrical type and then started telling her about his own life. It was quite right he was educated and one time he had thought of going into the church. But his father wasn't having any of that and made him go into his business, which was a hatpin factory. Les ran that business for a time, he said, and then the old man said he wanted to retire and he sold the business to Les. Six months later women gave up wearing hatpins. The old man had known it and sold his son a pup. Les went bankrupt. That's why he'd taken the job as boots at the Royal Albert. He'd been on his beam ends.

Knowing this about Les made Glad admire him, the way he took a Knock Out and then got up and started fighting again. It was plucky. Les with his hair falling out wasn't much to look at. But he was plucky. She told the boss about the hatpin business. "Hatpins, eh?" He laughed. "He'll come to bless the day that women gave up wearing 'em. Hotel business, that's where he'll show his flair." At the end of the year, he made Les head waiter. Glad herself was promoted from the cash desk to supervise the catering and the kitchens. That was some job with dinners for a hundred, for two hundred, at a time.

They took to going walks together in the afternoons. They talked things over and they were friends. Glad had a phrase for Les, "He's real gold." That summed up all she felt about him. She didn't love real gold.

Les told her more about his family. He hated his old man. He was a generous chap, but he couldn't forgive the old man the dirty trick he played him over the hatpin business. And what rankled even more, the old villain had read him a lecture for going bankrupt. "I ran that business for nigh on fifty years," he'd said, "and a nice little business it was. But I give it to me son and what happens? Bust in six months. Bust in six months! I've cut you out of my will, I have. Ruin me business in six months. Go through me money in three."

Les had two brothers and a sister. The one he was fondest of was young Tom. Tom was at sea, third officer in a line running the China ports. Les used to show Glad the letters Tom wrote describing his travels. They were exciting. The one she liked best was a long one describing going up the Yangtse Gorges. Tom volunteered for that service, because you got danger money. Fifty per cent. of the ships were lost every year, he said. Going up the rapids the current was so fast that with her engines full out, all she could do was to stay still. Then you had to fling out ropes and get the Chinks on the bank to tow you up. The Yangtse was full of submerged rocks, he said, and if you struck, did the Chinks try and save you? No sir. The cargo was what they were after, not awkward white survivors who might claim it. Shipwreck was certain death. But that wasn't all. When you went

through Soviet China, they sniped at you all day long. They were out to prevent you getting through and you had to run the gauntlet. That's why the pay was so high.

"Why does he do it?" she asked Les. "It's asking for trouble. Something awful'll happen to him one of these days."

Les smiled and shook his head. "That's Tom all over," Les said. "He's the daredevil one. Where there's a scrape, there's Tom. Always been like that. Always will be."

Glad looked at Les. He was well built, but he wasn't muscular. There was something urban and a bit flabby about him. She couldn't imagine any member of his family being a daredevil. "Is he like you?" she asked.

"I've got a photograph of him," Les said. "I'll bring it." And he fetched an enlargement from his bedroom.

Glad looked at the smart, white naval cap, the shoulders of a white uniform, and between the two a face much sharper than Les's. "He's not like you to look at," she said. "So smart. You never seem to care how you look."

Les opened his mouth to speak. Then he shook his head, flushing. "You can't see it from the photo," he said, "but Tom's only a little Tich."

She laughed and handed back the photograph. "Younger brothers always are," she said, "to the older ones."

The Boss made Les his under-manager: and when one of the directors of the hotel-chain came down to Sheffield and stopped at the Royal Albert, Les was called into his office. The hotel chain owned similar commercials all over the midlands and the west of England. They weren't satisfied with their manager of The Salisbury in H—, which was a boot town. His turnover had been steadily going down, while the trade of the rival George had gone up. They wanted a keen man to take over the job and work up the old connection. In the director's opinion, Les was the man. Did he consider he was ready for a job with such responsibility?

It was on the tip of his tongue to say "Yes" straight away. Then he thought better. He asked till the evening to make his decision. The director raised his eyebrows. "Connections here?"

"Sort of," Les said. "That is, no: you know."

"I know," said the director, smiling. "You could always marry the girl."

That afternoon, Les asked Glad to marry him. She had a small office now, and they had tea there together, which was cosy. Glad was looking pretty and the prospect of going away and leaving her made him realise that it wasn't just friendship he felt for her. He would have liked to take her in his arms and say, "Glad, my darling love, I

can't leave you behind. I want you with me always. I want you to be my wife : to have my children."

But he found himself explaining what the director had said about the job in H—— and the prospects it held out. And he couldn't say anything about the later part.

"That's marvellous, Les," she said. "Congratulations. I envy you."

"I haven't accepted yet," he said.

"Why on earth not?"

"Well," he answered, "you and me . . . we get on jolly well together . . . the way we work in, I mean. I wondered if you could . . . if you'd like to . . . come along with me."

"Me be manageress and you manager?" Her eyes glistened. "It's an idea, Les. But how could we manage it?"

"We could manage it," Les said, "if you were my wife."

She looked at him intently, biting her lower lip. "Keeping my salary, as manageress? We'd have to get that settled from the start, wouldn't we?"

He came over and took her by the elbows. "Would you do it, Glad?"

She nodded.

He put his arms round her, but she was stiff to him. Gave him a little peck and then pushed him away. "You know I don't love you, Les?"

He didn't answer.

"I like you, Les. I admire you more than any man I've met. But I don't want you to get this wrong. It's just a partnership, eh? Pooling our careers, like."

"That's it," Les said, holding and shaking her hand. "We've both got our careers, but we're joining forces. Mr. and Mrs. Stevens."

"The Manager and Manageress of The Salisbury." She kissed him on the lips. "You're real gold, Les, real gold."

The Director hadn't exaggerated. The Salisbury was in a bad way. There was almost no one there and no inducement for anyone to come there. The food was bad : the pipes of the beer-engines needed cleaning : the staff needed sacking and the rooms redecorating. The Stevens spent their honeymoon, doing the place up, attacking sloth, dirt, and incompetence on every front. They got up at half-past six and didn't go to bed till after midnight. Their conversation was limited to what had been done and what there was to do. And when they went to bed, they still went on talking about the business they were building together, until they fell into the sleep of exhaustion.

In a few months, their industry showed results. The turnover and the profits increased every week. Glad, who was in charge of the catering as in Sheffield, revolutionised the luncheon trade. They had

been running a half-crown four course luncheon at a loss. She added coffee and reduced it to two shillings. Every day the dining-room was full. To start with, they lost on the food, but the increase on drinks and regulars who stayed one or two nights a month, easily compensated the loss. That wasn't good enough for Glad. She planned, organised, and reorganised, until she had the luncheon room showing a modest profit, while maintaining the quality of her food.

Les had always kept himself in the background, while he was at Sheffield. His importance then lay in his power for work rather than his personality. But now he came forward, not obtrusively, but quietly appearing in the bar, standing a round of drinks, listening to jokes as if he hadn't heard them before. The man who kept the George was "a character", the sort of hearty hail-fellow, who can be amusing, but never knows quite when not to butt in. Les was liked by the local people. They felt he was straight. Without Les suggesting it, they started talking about having the Elks dinner at the Salisbury, as they always used to. It was better value than the George.

But this concentration of all their powers outwards towards organisation and affability left both of them almost dead towards one another. They were so tired that when they got away to their private suite, they just wanted to close their eyes and go to sleep.

Even the companionship, which had given them active pleasure before marriage, was blotted out in the struggle to make the hotel a success. And, of course, they could never take their free time off together. If one went out, the other had to stay behind and see that everything went all right.

Tom's letter congratulating Les on his marriage brought home to both of them the abnormality of this position. He took for granted so much of the ordinary romance and lovingness, which they didn't have. His letter was an unconscious criticism of their partner-relationship. Les had sent Tom a photograph of Glad, in her wedding dress. Tom wrote, "She looks a peach, Les. You're a lucky man, staying at home and making a success and marrying a beautiful girl like Glad. Give her a hug from me. That's only just and proper from her bro.-in-law."

When Glad read that, it was silly but it made her heart beat. It made her contrast her Les with his bald head and his fat arms with this "daredevil" Tom, who made the trip up the Yangtse gorges for the danger, not for the extra money.

She had a quarrel that evening with Les. It was over some trifle, a slip which he had pointed out in her work. She flared up suddenly and without knowing really what she was saying, she was at him. "Business, business, business. That's all you think about. The whole time. Money. Security. I know. They're all right. You've got to have 'em. But there's something else. Something you'll never see with yer flair for the hotel-business."



Then her sight cleared : before that, she had been too angry to see his face. It was grey and his lips trembled. "For some people." He spoke slowly. "But for us, what else is there?" There was no anger in his voice. She would have liked him to override her with anger. But her words struck no fire from him. They were like stones thrown into liquid mud, falling with a squelch and sinking gradually from sight.

"Is that my fault?" Her fingers kept turning and turning the wedding ring on her finger. "If you can't . . ."

"Stop doing that," he said and caught her by the wrist. "It was your bargain, remember."

She made to wrench her hand away and then she suddenly crumpled up, saying, "Oh, Les. Oh, Les," over and over again and she began to cry.

Joy leapt in him and he held her firmly, feeling the beat of her sobbing body under his hand. "My darling," he said, "I love you. You're all I want on earth."

There was a knock on the door.

"What do you want?"

A waiter's voice said, "Mr. Harris, sir. Wants to speak to you about a dinner, sir."

"Damn," Les said. "All right, I'm coming."

That is how it always was. Their companionship gave way to affection. But the pressure of work gave that no more time than it had given companionship. The hotel dwarfed their lives, the hotel and the success which they made their ultimate. They were popular, affable, prosperous, and profoundly unhappy.

Then Tom's ship was listed missing. He was on a line now, plying between Shanghai and Polynesia. Three days out of port, distress signals were picked up by wireless. The cargo had shifted and she was taking heavy seas. They read it all in the papers, with great headlines, when two other ships went to the rescue, but could find no trace except petrol floating on the water. There was little chance of any boat getting away safe in such a storm, said the papers. And supposing one had got away, there was little chance of her surviving.

Day after day went by, and the papers gave place to news of other shipwrecks, earthquakes, floods, and air disasters. Yet each time the telephone bell rang, Les ran to his office to see if it was the steamship company ringing to give him news. But it was only the butcher, the builder, or prospective clients. And his heart stopped thumping and his voice steadied into its normal efficiency again.

Les didn't show his feelings strongly. But Glad caught his anxiety about Tom. She wasn't in suspense, just because her husband was in suspense. It became part of her life, this wondering whether the crew had escaped or not. "If only one knew one way or the other," Les said.

"To know he was dead would be better than this." "Yes," she said, "You're right." Then Les was angry. "What can he mean to you?" he asked. "You've never met him, you don't know what he's like." "We've talked about him such a lot," she answered. "I suppose that's why."

When they'd given up hope, news came through. The company rang up to say that one of the boats had been picked up four hundred miles from the wreck. No names were known yet as to who the survivors were. Relatives would be notified as soon as they came through.

Actually the news came across the wireless first. Old Mr. Harris, who had been very kind and sympathetic, brought it across after closing time. There were fifteen survivors, including Tom Stevens. They broke a bottle of champagne on that. Les had been saying, "You know, he was just asking for trouble. All his life he went round asking for trouble and he got it in the end." Now he went round, beaming all over his face and saying, "That's Tom's luck. There never was a man like Tom for luck. If he fell in a cesspit, he'd come up covered in diamonds." He filled up Mr. Harris's glass and gave drinks all round to the staff and kept saying, "If you want to find Tom, you'll have to look where it's hottest. And there'll be Tom in the thick of it." "Well," said Mr. Harris, "we know where he'll be in the next world, then. Ha! ha! Ha! ha! ha!"

Next morning, it was all over the papers. Everybody in the town knew it was Les's brother Tom who was saved: and they came in and had a talk to the brother of the man who'd gone through an ordeal like that. It made them feel in touch with the things that matter.

Tom and some of the other survivors were sent home on leave. Who was to meet him in London? Glad said it was obvious. He was Les's brother, not hers. But Les insisted on her going, for some reason. And she had to give way. In some ways she wasn't sorry to be meeting Tom for the first time, when Les wasn't there. She knew so much of him, and yet so little. Sharing those days of anxiety with Les had made his absent brother part of her life.

Tom's parents lived up in Lancashire, so they weren't coming down to meet him. She was going to wear a white carnation and stand by the ticket collector at the barrier on Victoria Station, so that Tom could recognise her.

She arrived a quarter of an hour early, but she stood there patiently, afraid to go away for fear she might miss him. She was wearing her best, the brown which brought up her colouring and the brown of her eyes. She told herself there was no reason to feel so strung up and expectant. Then she told herself it was only natural, after all Tom had gone through. She thought of him, in his smart white naval cap and his ducks.

At last, yes at last, the train steamed in. The doors opened. People jumped out and filled the platform. They met, talked, and moved towards the barrier and her. She looked at each. She stared up the platform. There was no sign of Tom.

Then suddenly as three men, and an old lady and a young girl were coming through the barrier, one of them called "Glad" and before she knew what was happening, he was kissing her on the mouth and saying, "That's the one I couldn't give you for your wedding, and here's another for Howdydo."

She blushed as the others stood round laughing. Then Tom turned to them and said, "Meet the blushing bride. The bro's, not mine worse luck. This is Charlie, and that's Bert. And this is Bert's mother, Mrs. Clarke. And this . . . I'm afraid I . . ."

The girl said, "Miss Thistlethwaite."

"Miss What?" Tom said. Then he turned aside. "Anyway she's Charlie's girl."

This was not how Glad had imagined their meeting: nor was Tom, as she had pictured. She could recognise his photograph from him: but she was not prepared for his shortness. In high-heeled shoes she stood taller than him. And he looked so grey and pinched in the face, which was reasonable after his ordeal, but she didn't want what was reasonable. She wanted him to be bronzed, athletic. To show his courage and daring in his body and manner.

Tom shook his head appreciatively. "Old Les did pretty well for himself, I'll say. And him goin' to be a parson! I can see it."

"Get along," Glad said.

They were all standing on the pavement in the Station Yard. "That's just what we've got to do, us boys," Bert said. "Up at the head office of the company."

And before she realised what was happening, the three men had got into a taxi with their dunnage and arranged to meet the women two and a half hours later in the Strand Palace Hotel.

They were an hour late. Glad was bored frantic with the other two women. They apologised briefly, saying that there'd been more business than they'd expected. Glad said their breath smelt like it. She didn't laugh when they laughed at that. She said, "Look here, Tom. We've got to catch that half-past eight train, from Euston, to-night."

Tom shook his head. "We're all going to make an evening of it. You can't break the party up."

The others protested too.

"I've got to work in the morning," Glad said. "And I promised Les I'd bring his erring brother back by the 8.30."

"But . . ." Tom said.

Glad was desperate. "Well, look here," she said. "Tom and I'll go and phone to Les and see what we can persuade him."

"Do your stuff, Tom," said Charlie.

"Yes, do please, Mr. Stevens," echoed Miss Thistlethwaite.

As soon as they got out of earshot, Glad took Tom's arm. "I couldn't stand an evening with all them," she said. "I've had 'em all the afternoon. We won't go back by the 8.30. But let's go and celebrate by ourselves, just you and me."

"You don't mean that about going back then?"

"Not unless you want to."

"Suits me fine," Tom said.

Over dinner, she tried to get Tom to talk about the shipwreck. But he wouldn't. "That's all done with," he said. "Forget it. Talk about something nice. Talk about yourself."

She shook her head. "I'm not nice," she said.

Tom was rolling a cigarette, and she noticed his hands in contrast to her husband's, how quick and deft they were. "It's nice of you to come down and meet me like this," he said, "me being a stranger and all." But curiously enough, his nails and the skin at the ends of his fingers were bitten.

"You're not a stranger," she said. "You don't feel like one. Funny thing. I feel as if I'd known you ever such a long time."

And when they got back to the Salisbury that night at half-past one and went into Les's bedroom and found him asleep, it was Les rather than Tom that she felt to be the stranger. Les woke up when they switched the light on and rubbed his eyes and said, "What time is it?" He didn't notice Tom.

"Here he is," Glad said. "Here's the conquering hero." She felt guilty that they had come back so late, but her guilt made her defiant. "Aren't you going to kiss him?"

Les stretched out his hand to Tom, who had been supporting himself against the mantelpiece. "How's tricks?" he said.

Tom had nearly been asleep. He started forward, swept a vase from the mantelpiece, caught it for a moment and then dropped it. It smashed on the tiles, before the gas stove. "God, Les," he said, "I'm sorry." He picked up what was left. "I could glue it, in the morning."

"It doesn't matter," said Les. "You go to bed now."

"Smashing up the happy home," Glad said.

Les was lying back on the pillow. His eyes kept closing up. "I'll show Tom his room," said Glad. "Then I'll be right back." She took him to the door and turned. "Tom says he'll make us his headquarters, during his leave," she said.

"Grand," said Les, his head already sunk upon the pillow. "Turn the light out. Grand."

Tom was at a loose end. All morning Glad and Les were busy. With the autumn the club dinner season was coming on. Four nights a week, there was some do or other. The banqueting hall was crowded to overflowing. Les had plans for an extension room over the garages, that could be thrown into the banqueting hall and seat over 500, if necessary. It could be used as a dance hall, other evenings. He was pestering the directors to consider plans, having an architect down, using all his graft to get a local contractor rather than one from London. There wasn't enough furniture to supply the banqueting hall and the main dining-room. Every day tables and chairs had to be taken up for the dinners and shifted back in the early hours of the morning ready for 12.30 lunch. All that had to be supervised. It wasn't any good leaving it to the head waiter. He couldn't be trusted, Les said. "Well for goodness sake, get one who can be trusted," Glad said. "It is absurd you and me having to stand around watching over things like that."

If Tom had been a person who could entertain himself, it wouldn't have been so bad. But he wasn't. He sat down in the Stevens' private sitting-room, trying to read true stories or some wild west magazine. In ten minutes, he was up again, walking backwards and forwards from window to door. He couldn't be still. "What you need is exercise," Glad said. "Why don't you go out on the hills and walk. It's only a threepenny bus ride." But no, it wasn't that. He was all right. He was quite happy where he was. And he went wandering around the hotel, looking lost. He stood in the hall, talking to the porter for twenty minutes, keeping him from his work, he mooned into the writing room and tried to write a letter and gave it up. Then he paced up and down the corridor whistling to himself.

One morning he went out and when he came back, he looked happy. Glad met him, when she was coming out of the kitchen. "What d'you think, Glad?" he said.

"I'm too busy to think," she said, going into the luncheon room

He followed her and caught hold of her arm. "I've been out and bought a radiogram," he said. "May I keep it in your room?"

"O.K.," she said and set about putting the menu cards in their stands. She forgot about Tom and the machine immediately. She was even surprised to hear music when she went along to her sitting-room to get a cocktail before lunch. She opened the door and the full noise broke on her. There was Tom standing on the hearth-rug, jigging to the dance tune. He held out his arms and took her, dancing in the cluttered space, only two or three paces each way. He was humming when she came in the room and he went on humming while he danced with her, scarcely moving his feet, but only his body to the music.

Coming straight from the preoccupation of work, she was taken

suddenly into quiet thoughtlessness. She felt relaxed, guided, and supported by his arms. "I like this," she said softly.

"Pretty good tone," he said. "Cost twenty-five guins."

The music stopped and she broke quickly from him and got out drinks.

Tom went to the radiogram and started fiddling about with it. She brought his drink over to him. "See how it works?" he said, showing her the gadgets. She lifted her glass to him. "Here's luck," she said.

"Oh yes, drinks." He lifted his. "Here's mud in yer eye." He laughed. "Chap in the bar said that to me. New one. Here's mud in yer eye."

"You've been away a long time," she said, turning impatiently.

He followed her, hurt, and sat on the arm of her chair. "You like the set, Glad?"

"It's lovely," she said.

"I bought it for you."

"Oh Tom, don't be silly. You mustn't."

"I bought it for you," he repeated. "Why's that silly?"

"Why? Well . . . you must have some girl you want to give things to."

"There's you," he said.

She looked at his face intently, searching the depth of his meaning. But his expression was empty. She took his hand and pressed it. There was no returning pressure. "You're nice, Tom," she said.

The door opened and Les came in rubbing his hands. "Two hundred and seventeen for the Bootmakers' Annual next month. Smack in the eye for the George, eh?"

Glad poured him out a drink and Tom put on the wireless again. "Dance, Les," Glad said.

Les flopped down in a chair. "Me dance? You should hear me in the room below. Stampeding elephants aren't in it."

So Tom and Glad danced together again, while Les sat, drinking his cocktail and following them round with his eyes. At the end of the dance, the music quickened and Tom lifted Glad from the floor and whirled her round in the narrow space. "No more vases," Les shouted. "Look out." But Tom went on quicker and quicker, keeping her close to him, till the music finished. Then he let her go and she caught hold of him, flushed and laughing. "I'm giddy," she panted. "Les, he squeezed all the breath out of my body."

There was nothing in it of course. But it made Les uneasy. When he came into the room, Tom and Glad nearly always seemed to be dancing together, with their arms very close round one another, moving so little in the confined space that it was more like a long hug to music

than a dance. It was silly of him to be annoyed, and yet he was annoyed, as he sat by the fire reading his paper ; while they joked and " assed about " four feet away, as if he didn't exist. Once or twice, he tried to stop them with sarcasm. But Glad said, " Goodness gracious, Les, you talk like an old man of eighty." And Les shut up, because that was how he felt, an old man of eighty, on the shelf already.

What annoyed Les even more than the dancing was the " assing about ". Glad would open her bag and take out her compact, to powder her nose. Tom would snatch it from her, leap up from the sofa and retreat into a corner, holding it behind his back. " Oh, come along, Tom," Glad would say. " Don't be an ass. Give over." Tom laughed at that and said, " Come and fetch it." " You're just a pest," Glad said. " The nursery's where you ought to be." But she got up and went over to Tom. " Look here," she said, laughing, " hand it over and don't be silly." Tom shook his head. Glad made a grab at it, failed, caught him round the waist and they began wrestling. " For goodness sake," Les said, looking up from his paper. " For goodness sake." But they went on wrestling, tumbling over the sofa, rolling over the floor. And all the time they were gasping and laughing, like a couple of kids. Then Glad discovered that Tom was ticklish under the armpits and at the back of his knees. She only had to get Tom there to set him roaring hysterically, until he gave up the compact. This sort of thing happened over and over again : Tom ruffling her hair, coming up behind her and clapping his hands over her eyes and saying, " I'm the Big Bad Wolf." And every time Glad would pretend to be annoyed. " That brother of yours," Glad said, " you never told me he was such a nuisance." " You could stop him, if you wanted," Les answered. " He's such a kid," she said, " nothing 'd stop him. You're a funny pair to be brothers, aren't you ? " " What d'you mean by that ? " he asked. " Nothing," she said. " Just, you're so different. That's all."

Tom was always on at Glad to come to London and see a show with him. " I can't," she said. " I'm in business. I haven't got the time." But at last Les said, " Why don't you go, Glad ? It'd freshen you up. You don't get much fun down here."

So it was all arranged for the next Tuesday and Glad got a new gold *lamé* tunic, with a black skirt and a black halo hat, which would do equally well for going up in the train in the afternoon and the dress circle in the evening. When she put it on just to show him, Tom said she looked a real peach in it. But Glad told him not to be silly, because she hadn't had her hair done and she looked a fright. She said wait till Tuesday, after she'd been to the hairdresser and then he'd see. Tom said a pretty girl like her didn't have to worry how her hair looked. But Glad snorted and said, " You men ! "

On Tuesday morning, there was a letter for Tom. It was from

Bert and said, he was going to be in London just for one day before he went back east. Could they meet and paint the town red? Tom looked at the date Bert was going to be in London and it was that very Tuesday. He didn't know what to do.

Then Glad came in and sat down at the table. They all had breakfast together in the luncheon room. "How's the infant?" she said.

"No better for seeing you, beautiful," Tom said. He pushed the letter across to her. "It's from Bert."

"What's he got to say?"

"Read it."

She ordered her breakfast and then she read the letter. "Well?" she asked.

"What am I to do?" Tom asked. "It's to-day."

"What do you want to do?"

"I don't know."

"You go out with him," she said. "You'll enjoy yourself much more than being with me. You paint the town red."

"But what about you?"

"Me?" She laughed. "Don't you worry about me. I can look after myself all right. I was only going to keep you company."

"We could do it another day," Tom suggested. "Old Bert's sailing to-morrow."

"Yes, we could."

"You sure you don't mind?"

"Of course, I don't mind. You have your little jaunt."

Tom got up. "That's damned nice of you, Glad," he said. "It takes a weight off my mind, you feeling that way about it." He shuffled a moment. Then he said, "I'll be able to get the 10.12 train, if I hurry." As he got to the door, he shouted, "See you to-night."

But at ten o'clock that night, a telegram was phoned through, STAYING NIGHT TWO DUCHESSSES BERT SENDS LOVE TOO TOM. Les wrote down the message and handed it to Glad, who'd just come into the office. "Two duchesses!" he said, chuckling. "That's a good one. I'd like to see *their* coronets."

Glad read the message and then threw it into the waste-paper basket. "D'you call that funny?" she asked.

Les went on chuckling. "It's a scream," he said. "Two duchesses, my eye!"

"Well, I'm sorry for you," she said. "I think you've got a very misplaced sense of humour." She walked out of the room. Les followed her. "Glad," he said, "don't be wild."

She shook her arm free. "For you, his eldest brother, to take it like that, is nothing short of disgusting," she said.

When Tom came back next afternoon, Les was out, getting some fresh air. Tom knocked on the door of the sitting-room, poked his



head round, grinned, and said, "May I come in?" in a silly voice.

"Nobody'll stop you," Glad said.

He came in and warmed his hands at the fire. "How's tricks?"

"I wish you wouldn't use that phrase. It's so stupid."

Tom shrugged. "Bro Les uses it."

She lit a cigarette. "Must you do everything Bro Les does?"

Tom walked over and turned on the wireless. He waited till it warmed and burst into music. Then he came and leant over her. "Sore with me about last night?"

She didn't answer.

"Sore, because I go on a spree. That's it."

She stood up suddenly. "Why don't you marry and settle down?" she said. "You'll be too old soon."

He shook his head. "I'm not the marrying sort."

"That's what you want," she said. "You want an anchor. That's why you're so nervy and restless."

"No, thank you, mum. Come easy, go lightly. Love 'em and leave 'em. That's my motto. I learnt that lesson from the old man."

She took his arm. "That's no good, Tom," she said, "it's treating women like cattle."

He waltzed her round the room. "That's how they like it," he said.

"I *won't* dance," she said. "Leave go of me." She stopped dead and he left go. "You don't mind if I go on dancing, do you?" He stood in front of her, jigging his legs. Then he caught up a cushion and danced with it hugged to his breast.

"You've never been like this before," said Glad. "What's wrong with you?"

"I'm feeling fine," he said. "That's what's wrong. That cute little duchess. Oh boy, oh boy. You should have seen her."

Suddenly she lost her temper. She snatched the cushion from his arms and flung it on the sofa. When he went on dancing and laughing, she switched off the wireless. "I've had enough," she said. "Just about enough from you, Tom Stevens. But I'm through now. And you're going. You came down here, making a convenience of us and the house and then off you go. . . . I won't stand it, do you hear?"

"Glad," Tom said. "Glad, what's up?"

"What's up! Huh! what's up? Your stay's up. You move on now. That's what's up. I'm fed to the teeth with you, you and yer Berts and yer cute little duchesses."

Tom put his hand in his pocket. "O.K.," he said. "But keep your rag on." He drew out a small leather box and opened it. There was a gold wristlet watch inside. He threw it across to her. "Here's thanks for having me."

She didn't catch it. It fell at her feet. She kicked it. "I don't want it. I don't want any of your dirty presents."

Tom walked to the door. "Sorry it ended like this," he said. "I was going anyway. Sailing next week, and got to see the old man first."

She stared at him, wanting to speak. But she could say nothing. He closed the door and she heard him go into his room whistling.

She saw the watch lying in a little gold bunch on the carpet. She picked it up. On the back of the watch was cut, To Glad with Love and Kisses from Tom. She threw it on the sofa. With Love and Kisses, thought he could buy her off did he? What would she say to Les? She sat down in a chair and covered her face with her hands. She wanted to cry but she couldn't. She wondered what all the fuss had been about.

Tom came along the passage and opened the door. He was carrying a small suitcase. "Will you send my dunnage up Goods," he said.

"Are you really going?" she asked.

"I was going anyway," he said.

"I didn't mean what I said just now," she said. "Won't you wait till Les comes?"

He shook his head. "I've left a note."

"Aren't you going to kiss me good-bye?" she said. "To show there's no ill-feeling."

He put a dance tune on the gramophone. It was one they had heard the first night in London. "*We kiss while we're dancing. It's Continental. It's Continental.*" He beckoned to her and she came into the open and they danced, with their lips together. To Glad it was ecstasy. Even after the record stopped, they stood mouth to mouth. Then she said softly, "Can't you stop, Tom?"

Tom stepped away from her, as if suddenly recalled to memory. Then he shook his head, smiling.

"Why not? Just to-night."

"Can't," he said. He picked up his suitcase. "I've got a date with a duchess."

# CZECH DRAMA

By MANFRED GEORG

THE CENTRAL EUROPEAN Theatre, more strictly the theatre in general, has—at the present time—one of its greatest strongholds in Prague. Here, in the capital of the young Czecho-Slovakian Republic, may be seen the development of a dramatic art on a soil for centuries cultivated and fertilised with the most forcible compounds of Western and Slav civilisation. This art will soon add an important contribution to the history of the modern theatre by the impetuosity with which it is forming its objects into a plastic shape, by its vigour and independence and by its entire lack of sophistication.

Since dramatic art, no less than any other art, cannot originate from a vacuum but must needs grow, in every sense, out of the general circumstances of a people and a nation, it is necessary to summarise in a few words the origin of the Czecho-Slovakian theatre of the present day.

Czecho-Slovakia has been founded by the enormous energy and national faith of two men : Masaryk and Benes. Their creative imagination and their faith did not originate from chauvinism, but from a deeply-felt humanism, and had for its object the people's right of self-government. Up to the present time, the young nation has had politically a very difficult time. Its internal reorganisation had to face the problem of leading to normality the organic, evolutionary national life of a people in revolt for centuries against the pressure of foreign predomination. At the same time, an attempt had to be made to settle the dispute with the minorities (especially with the Germans and Hungarians). This meant, from the beginning, violent attacks from the neighbouring countries. These attacks became more threatening since the National Socialist revolution in Germany, and they reached their climax when German and Italian fascism began to co-operate with the purpose of distributing the interests in the Danube Basin. It will be the task of a later historiography to show that the struggle of the smaller nations of Central Europe for their independence has been at the same time an effort to save the most valuable cultural and spiritual blessings of mankind.

This development in the C.S.R. which has been constantly threatened by the great powers ready to attack it, and by hostile political principles, has to no small degree contributed to the mobilisation of those potentialities which manifest themselves to-day in the sphere of the Czech Theatre. It must be added that the Czech public is extremely fond of theatre-going—people are far more receptive to everything artistic, and far more susceptible to experiments and foreign civilisation than,

for instance, the small bourgeois layer of the German minority in Prague, or the theatre-audience in the German districts of Northern Czecho-Slovakia, which are captured by National Socialist ideology. Thus it happens that the repertory of the theatre in Prague represents the entire contemporary world-literature, very soon after the first nights in the large capitals of the West, East, and South-East; and almost every French or New York play of the season will appear on the stage at Prague just as quickly as the dramatic literature of the Balkans, Rumania, Poland, etc., the latter being almost unknown to the rest of the world.

Owing to the literary standing in the respective countries it must be confessed that these plays are, on the whole, not more than good entertainment, and that (apart from the production of the Soviet Union), their merit consists mainly in conveying ethnological and cultural values—they certainly do not formulate essentially new ideas. So the most important feature remains the national Czech stage, and especially the two theatres whose names have become known throughout the rest of Europe, in spite of the difficulty caused by the fact that the Czech language is but little known outside the country. One of those theatres is the "Liberated Theatre" of Voskovec and Werich. It is well known in Vienna and will visit the Paris Exhibition. The other is E. F. Burian's "D.37." which has not yet ventured farther than Austria and Switzerland.

However, the greatest importance for theatrical history must be attributed to both theatres. Their development decidedly shows a cultural, political, and European character. The "Liberated Theatre" of Voskovec and Werich was founded ten years ago by the artistic vanguard group, Devetsil, among whose most important members were a radical, the art-theorist Teige, and the leader of Czech surrealism, Nezval. The two young playwrights, Frejka and Houze, called their stage after the well-known book of Tairoff *Liberated Theatre* and defined their aims as the resistance against the outlived barrenness of the average European stage, but there was certainly something more in the wind, a poetism which looked up to Apollinaire as its master. The whole was characterised by an artistic exclusiveness until two young students turned up: Voskovec and Werich. They broke into the sacred circle of these experiments with a satirical revue, the "Vest-Pocket-Revue" which has later become so famous. Voskovec and Werich had not the faintest notion that they were to be the originators of an entirely new style in the theatre. To-day, their stage is the most popular in the town, the meeting-place of the liberal, anti-fascist citizens as well as of a large part of the Socialist circle.

Voskovec and Werich devoted ten years to the task of finding an amusing style in which to present interesting plays, a style connected at the same time to their first endeavours as regards the scenic, but

outgrowing them by far as to the contents. These two men who are simultaneously actors, dramatisers, and authors, appear on the stage, as it were, at the periphery of events. In their revues they show how an epoch of poetic-parodical fun, although of a clownish quality, has been transmuted into a profoundly human and political form. The play itself is either a modern dramatising of a subject such as the life of François Villon (*Lumpenballade*—Trumpery-Ballad), or it represents, as in their latest work *Rechts und Links*, an actual event of a somewhat matter-of-fact dramatic quality which—by its special scenic form—still manifests a certain stage-proof irrealism. Voskovec and Werich themselves represent two characters who have a relatively loose connection with the performance—they push it forward, but in such a manner as, for instance, chance and the unconscious make Chaplin the moving power of his films. They step forth—between the different scenes—from behind the curtain, they always wear a clown's mask adapted to the "milieu" of the play and they make "comments" not only on the play, but on the time, the events in the street, on Europe, God, the world, Hitler, Gandhi, and whatnot. And almost every dialogue finishes up with a comic song which derives its satirical strength from the play as well as from actual happenings. It hits the point just like the numerous catchwords of the dialogue, which frequently develops quite spontaneously out of the acclamations of the audience.

The "Liberated Theatre" has thus gradually become a stage for social and political satire, unique in the whole of Europe. The determining influences of this theatre and its subjects have been the spectre of war, the gloomy fear of "Totality" and the social changes in East and West. It is not a repertory theatre, but a specimen of the human development of two fellows of genius, and of the audience at the same time. It is decidedly "living theatre". Its two leaders once gave this explanation: "We became aware that art had begun to leave reality almost completely behind because the latter seemed to smell offensively. To-day reality is already reeking, and the artist, along with the scientist, the politician, and the revolutionary, must do their best to get rid of the corpse." So they became more and more coalescent: theatre and reality. We have already mentioned the latest play, *Right and Left*, in which working and middle classes assist each other in saving the country from a fascist *putsch*. This play is decidedly a play of the "Volksfront" although the word is never mentioned. Its most effective scene is set in a broadcasting station which is being seized by a girl in order to stir up the citizens of the republic, by means of the wireless, against a *putsch* which the "striped shirts" are preparing.

Incidentally, this play has been filmed in the course of this summer, with Voskovec and Werich as two camelots—it will be shown in London

(as was their first film *Hej Rup*), and in all European capitals. With regard to the technical side and the economical employment of the language it has been made directly with a view to the possibilities of an international effect.

It is not surprising that this theatre is highly obnoxious to the circles of Czech fascism who, according to their votes, have quite numerous partisans in the capital. In 1934, Voskovec and Werich exposed with brilliant sarcasm the phraseology of chauvinism and the legend of the origin of a sham national hero in their play *Hangman and Fool*. There were scandals and street demonstrations, and the famous slogan of "cultural bolshevism" was then proclaimed in Prague as well as elsewhere. Nevertheless, it finally turned out to the advantage of the theatre which, unconcernedly, continued its work. Yet it never transgressed the limitations of the stage and did not become a meeting-place for demonstrators, but remained (thanks to the moral strength of the two "clowns") quite as much "theatre" as does the most realistic grotesque film.

The other interesting theatre of Prague, the "D.37.", developed in a somewhat different way. "D" is the initial of the Czech word *divadlo*—theatre, and "37" is an abbreviation for the calendar-year. Thus the name changes every year at the beginning of a new theatrical season—in September, at the commencement of its fifth year of activity, it will be called "D.38.". Young Burian was a member of the famous family of actors, among whom the tenor Karel Burian enjoyed a world-wide reputation. Originally Burian belonged to the above-mentioned circle "Devetsil", but after some time he retired and founded in 1934 his new stage which, as regards its social structure, is certainly unique. The actors play without prompter, superintendent, or any auxiliary staff, in a community complete in its artistic, technical, and social perfection. It has a board of administration, elected by votes, to decide about wages, control the budget, etc. Besides, there is a working committee who fixes the programme, and each member of the "collectiv" has the right, between the 10th and 15th day of each month, to examine the accounts of the concern. The leader, E. F. Burian, also receives a salary which must always be approved by the assembly of members. In his book, *Broom the Stage*, Burian has formulated his views on the theatre and the attitude by which it is inspired: "That only the actor who is secure in the knowledge that he works for himself and that in his work he is a responsible factor in public culture, is willing to expand real self-sacrificing working energy. His wardrobe must give him pleasure, the stage must be a creative place and the public must be a friend."

"D.37." is a vanguard stage par excellence. With a boldness that is ever-startling, it performs modern plays such as the *Dreigroschenoper*, or Wedekind's *Fruehlings-Erwachen*, classics such as Molière or

Shakespeare, national literature such as Macha, Klicpera, and Salda, Russians such as Pushkin, Gorki, Pogodin, etc. Lighting is most effectively applied in order to achieve scenic characterisation. Following the example of Meyerhold and Oblochkoff, the stage is divided into cross and diagonal sections, filmic projection is frequently employed, either to extend the proportion of the stage, or to intensify it and to make it appear unreal. The choreographic and gymnastic element is brought into the course of the performance—all these innovations plainly show genius and audacity. There is, however, no sign of mannerism in any of it. Side by side may be seen the Hamlet-Saga in a well-nigh burlesque form, resembling a low popular ballade (*Hamlet III*), and the scarcely traceable stylisation of realism in Pogodin's *Aristokratín*, or the balladesque fabulousness of *Eugène Onégin*.

Last May, Burian summoned all the members of the vanguard theatres to a conference in Prague in which Danish, Swedish, Austrian, Yugoslav, and other theatres took part and thoroughly discussed all the problems of the vanguard theatre and the associated arts (painting, sculpture, photography, film, and architecture). This is one of Burian's most pronounced characteristics: he includes in his theatrical work the totality of all the artistic manifestations connected with the stage. His ambitious plans aim at the absolute conquest of the theatre for the people. In the book mentioned before he thus formulates his thesis: "The modern theatrical artist makes a firm stand against the acquisitive tendencies of that class which supposes it has the right to employ its financial resources for the purchase of everything it is able to buy. The modern dramatic artist performs a service but not slavishly."

Here again may be found the closest connection with the period and its problems, but also the assertion of the theatrical point of view, reducing the materialisation of a subject, in a word: playing.

It would be unfair merely to mention Voskovec and Werich and "D.37." when the Czech theatre is being discussed. The "National-theater", for instance, with its branches, the Municipal Theatre, the "Kammerspiele" and other theatres of Prague certainly rank on a high level, although they cling to tradition and are more evolutionary than revolutionary. The Czech Opera can be considered one of the most prominent institutions of its kind in Europe, and the "Nationaltheater" has a repertory which, after all, includes first performances of Paul Raynal, Ferdinand Bruckner, Pirandello, and plays of O'Neill and others which appear in Europe for the first time.

The German theatre in Prague, enriched by numerous first-rate actors since the revolution of the third Reich, also shows, in opera and drama, a brilliant repertory. It is essentially dependent on Vienna, Paris, Budapest, and also arranges, of late, special evenings for the

literary vanguard. The German theatre is strongly supported by the Jews of Prague and, therefore, consequent upon the special development of that circle, it is decidedly in favour of a cultural liberalism. Plays representing problems of our period mean—for them—taking a great risk. At the same time the two German theatres are mediators for the Czech dramatic literature of the period, represented by such effective authors as Capek, Vilem Werner, Edmond Konrad, and others. The importance of these theatres is increased by the fact that famous German actors and conductors, expatriated by National Socialism, appear on this stage (Bassermann, Durieux, Deutsch, Bruno Walter, Kleiber, etc.).

Since Berlin has proved an utter failure, and Vienna's literary deficiency is obvious, the German theatres of Prague, along with the theatre of Zuerich, are the only stages which promote a certain development of German literature and theatrical art.

*(Translated by Gerd Abraham.)*



# TOWARDS A CYMRIC THEATRE

By KEN ETHERIDGE

FOUR YEARS AGO, when I began writing plays, it was with no idea of making money. I approached the art in an experimental mood, much as a sculptor might cast his eye on wood or marble after modelling in clay. Perhaps the analogy is not wholly imaginative; poetry and painting had already been essayed, and there still remain obscure tomes in manuscript of epics unread and symbolic paintings and undigested sketches, dark in boxes and closed covers. I came to drama from these two mistresses and found in the muscular economy of Thespis a richer medium, although more rigid.

The short play, *Underground*, was one of my first attempts. It has been variously described as "a magnificent piece of writing" (E. Martin Browne), "Propaganda—a thesis of colliery life" (Jack Carlton), and "a libel on the miner" (a well-known Rhondda manager), while another colliery manager has warmly congratulated me on the truth of its portrayals. It is a tragedy in little, and I have attempted, as sincerely as I may, to show the gradual, deadening influence of the miner's work. The drama of this piece is centralized in the character of Dick, a young miner who is half-way between the carefree attitude of the boy and the half-cynical resignation of the older men. His moods range from the almost romantic verve of youth to the despair of premature age :

"DAVIES : When we are young, we all have our dreams—

DICK. And that's the time to find out what the world's like—to see things and hear things—and fill your heart with fine things to love, when you are young and everything is fresh, and you have the strength to enjoy it. I've got a heart as well as a body—"

He is in continual conflict with the killing work and the brutality of the mine. If some people would assert that Dick is too poetic for a miner, I can only reply that the character is symbolic of life and not an altogether realistic young man. He is in contact with deeper forces than the bickering of the miners and the lives of animals and men caught together in the "black tunnels". Only once or twice has my actor caught that note of mystic communion with some eternal force, manifest even in the coal. There always comes a hush over the house when he approaches these lines, spoken in a sunken voice, as he regards the coal-seams round him :

"All this was a great forest at one time, with little green sprays, and queer animals in the swamp, coming out of the water. It was growing—the plants and trees springing up in great bursts of life ! Then it fell and became coal, and we dig it up to get the sunshine out of the belly of the earth.—Coal—black bones of things we tear

out again into the light.”—And here I must acknowledge the encouragement of one critic who has been the most appreciative of the different elements in my dramas. Rupert Harvey, of the British Drama League, so far stands alone in the estimation of myself and my players as a sympathetic appreciator, bringing no preconceived West End opinions to our efforts, but alive to our attempt at creating something new on the Welsh stage. We have too many so-called adjudicators, who are supposed to encourage the progressive element in amateur drama, but who succeed in praising only the smart minority that fits in with their own experience of slick entertainment. If we are to bring out of Wales a drama worthy of its traditions and its actors, a new race of playwrights, producers, and *critics* must be created, and the old copy-the-English-at-all-costs toadies must be swept from the boards. We have learnt from them and we give thanks. Let us no longer flatter them with imitation, when we may outshine the elegant bastard that was born on “carpet consideration”.

I have produced my plays with the Cymric Players, a little company of amateur actors that I have gathered together and trained during the last two years. We began in May, 1935, with three of my short pieces. Here is a list of our productions:—

May, 1935. *Underground, Sleeping Partner, Tristram and Isolde.*

November, 1935. *Rhiannon*, a full-length romance of Wales in the Middle Ages, in blank verse.

March, 1936. *Underground* was awarded first prize by the British Drama League.

June, 1936. *Living on the Wind* was awarded first prize at the Aberdare Little Theatre Social Service Competition.

August, 1936. *Prince of Annoon* awarded second prize as a radio play at Fishguard National Eisteddfod.

March, 1937. *The Lamp* awarded first prize by the British Drama League.

My actors do not pretend to be perfect, but I am certain of one thing—their feelings are as near to the genuine as possible. When I first looked round for players, I avoided the too educated. There is a certain restraint about the cultured man or woman inconsistent with the adequate expression of feeling. So my best actors came from the mines and the farms, no scholars, and often clumsy speakers, but possessing a fine range of feelings unfettered by self-consciousness or false culture. They had no preconceived notions of acting, so my material was in a beautiful state of fluidity. Looking back upon some of our experiments on the stage, I can only thank with all my heart these young men and women who bore with me in trying to express my first writings. It was all *creation*, even as far as the make-up, settings, and lighting.

For there was no scenery available for my plays of the mine. The local welfare halls looked askance at my inquiries; they had only the usual “drawing-room” flats and a wood-scene. So we set about making

our own. I went under and memorized the timbering and rock-formations and designed a setting as realistic as paint and calico could achieve. Part of this is still in use with us, though we have been forced to simpler means in the Festival competitions.

*Underground* has had a strange and varied career on the stage. The play was written as far back as 1932, when it was awarded the prize in the Inter-College Eisteddfod of the Welsh Universities, and was produced in the following year by the Aberystwyth and Swansea students (the Dramatic Society of my own College, Cardiff, ignored my appeal for a production) though I did not see either of these shows. Then, after a spell of teaching in my home county, I collected the Cymric Players and we produced the play, and later in the Festival, when it was sent forward to the Welsh Final. There, however, Martin Browne found our production too heavy and sent to London instead a slick piece of stage machinery. Other companies have since performed the play and left me cold and contemptuous of my own work, because they aped my first production and dealt in false emotions.

The question of art and emotion is not within my present scope, yet it is pertinent to mention my own impressions as author and producer, and I can claim that we are doing what no other company in Wales is doing at the moment—showing this unfamiliar phase of life, with myself supervising the heart and dress of the scene. It seems to me that when an actor tries to project an emotion which he has obviously never felt and never will, he is propagating bad art. Gestures and intonations are the mechanics of his profession, and it is easy to assimilate the suitable poses and voices; we are shown “performances”, and the stage becomes a circus of well-behaved men and women. I have never ridiculed true feeling in an actor. Crudeness of voice or movement are certainly better eliminated, though I prefer to leave a little coarseness if there is a risk of losing the vital emotion. So my actors have been trained to register *real* feelings and we have recreated together the characters I have conceived. There is surely one gentle ghost in the greatest age of English Drama that approves my method.

Creation in the theatre, as I see it, does not consist in merely reproducing characters well known in drama or real life. It is part of the creator's work to give his audiences a new subject—to express the limitless variety of life by showing a phase hitherto untouched. Originality of treatment must follow, since a new theme cannot be played to old conventions.

Both these requirements we have tried to fulfil. The themes of my most successful plays are original in that no one has before attempted a portrayal of the Welsh miner at work—not, at least, the miner of my own locality (the Amman Valley), who is of a finer mettle than the mouthy and raw-voiced Rhondda Shoni. In most cases he still retains some faint echo of Welsh culture, a delight in music and the use of fine words and the singing voice lifting into music. How can this

temperament be served by niggling comedies of the kitchen or drawing-room? He requires, if you like, scope for the expression of that *hwyl* which is mercilessly dubbed "melodrama" by the advanced critics.

Recently I took a grave risk in performing in one of my own plays, as well as producing. The adjudicator stated that our acting was at fault. He was a professional performer; I was only the author. This worthy critic also suggested that I should deal in lighter themes. Perhaps I have been foolish to believe that a playwright, like any other artist, should feel truly what he depicts. I have seen and felt with the dangers and tribulations of the miner's family—my own. And this I have written, not because I am bitterly propagating a black mood, nor that I wish to point eternally at the crushed heart of the misunderstood worker—but because the drama of the miner's life has been felt by me, and I have tried to express it in this form as sincerely as I might.

We have not always kept to the sordid realism of the colliery. The full-length play *Rhiannon* was based on a lovely Welsh legend, the second branch of the Mabinogion, no pioneer in this field, though our production was entirely original in that the costumes and settings were designed by me. The Black Book of Carmarthen and the Book of Kells gave me numerous ideas and designs, and the curtain of *Rhiannon's* bower I made up from two terrifying eagles, half-human, with yellow beards like curled plumes, and wearing the red shoes of faery, as they watched over the luckless child that brought so much unhappiness to his mother, *Rhiannon*. The child was spirited away under the noses of the waiting-women and they made up a plot to accuse *Rhiannon* of his murder. One of our greatest triumphs was the second act curtain, when she stood amongst her accusers—*Rhiannon* white from child-bed taking upon herself the seven years' penance at the horse-block, the eagles of her bower hovering round her and the torches dimming in the witching gloom.

We have performed this play some half a dozen times and still hear continual and affectionate tributes to the colour and the poetry. Long may the red cloak of *Pwyll* live in the minds of our audiences and the golden buckles of the princess *Rhiannon* when she led him home! The shining gold and silver of the princes fighting in the morning dusk for the honour of the lady; the clear voice of the lost boy telling his mother his name, and her reply:

"You shall be called *Pryderu*, which means my sorrow

That shall live in you and be remembered in you—"

are touching upon lovely memories of this forgotten romance. Love and the redemption of purity after the full glance at the brutal coal-dirt, are what my players and I have given to the Welsh stage. If this is pronouncing too harsh a judgment on modern life, showing it ugly, and with beauty only breaking through in suffering or in legend, perhaps the contemplation will breed a future race hardier for its re-conception and safeguarding.

# TELEVISION, THEATRE, FILM

By S JOHN WOODS

THE BAWLING OF a lusty infant in the nursery of entertainment is rapidly developing into comprehensible speech. For seven or eight months we have enjoyed the privilege of being the only country in the world with a regular television service. The rich man's toy will soon be common property and it is well, perhaps, to ask what is this new entertainment.

Before television was established the film magnates were scared of competition. Already, it is obvious that this fear is, as far as the B.B.C. is concerned, groundless. Like radio, television is an art of intimacy and actuality. The audience is a single person in his own home, who has made no occasion of his entertainment, incurred no inconvenience of travelling or expenditure of money, and who has to be won and moved in a very different way from that possible on stage or screen. There can be no appeal to mass emotion, the "perfection" of the commercial film is undesirable, the human being in front of the microphone and camera is the all-important element. That much has become apparent to everybody during these preliminary months. Less attention has been paid to technique, and it is this side of television that I want, very tentatively, to consider.

In any dramatic art, stage, film, television, there is a process concerned with four things: the spectator watches movement in time and space: viewpoint, movement, time, space. (I use the word movement to cover not only actual movement but also movement of a non-physical nature, i.e. Romeo's speech over the bier of Juliet or the dialogue of Ibsen or Shaw.)

I want to consider these four things related to television in comparison with stage and screen. Viewpoint on the stage is simple. The spectator, in his capacity of the "fourth wall", is fixed; the viewpoint can only change when the other elements change, in other words when the play stops and the scene changes, and normally this occurs not more than half a dozen times during the play. With the film the opposite is the case: in a full length film there will be literally hundreds of changes of viewpoint, "shots" as they are termed. Far from being fixed, the spectator may see a figure from a long distance so that he is quite small, or so close that only his lips are visible, moreover the change from one viewpoint to another is immediate and, far from stopping the action, forms part of the action. Also he can *see round* objects and persons. For instance, imagine a scene where a messenger brings a telegram to the heroine who reads that the hero has met with a serious accident. On the stage the scene is viewed from a fixed point, and the contents of the telegram would have to be conveyed to the audience by speech of some kind. In a film you might

see a long shot of the telegram being delivered, followed by a close-up of the heroine's face changing in expression from surprise to worry, quickly followed by a close-up over her shoulder of the telegram itself. The viewpoint has shifted from a considerable distance, to a near one, and then round to the back, in one short scene. A convenient analogy is with sculpture. The stage is relief carving. Only one face of the stone is in use. The film is sculpture in the round. The spectator moves about and sees several faces successively.

Television comes somewhere between the two. At the moment four cameras can be used on any one scene so that there are more viewpoints possible than on the stage, but they are less fluid than with the film. For instance, in the above scene the third shot, the close-up of the telegram in which the spectator virtually looks over the heroine's shoulder, would not be possible, as the camera looking over her shoulder would have to be visible in the other shots. This difficulty occurs because in film the sequence of shooting is of no importance while in television each shot must immediately follow the preceding shot. This concerns the third element of time and will be considered later.

If the viewpoint can change there is the intimate problem of how this change is to be made. Here the film and television are very different. The change in the film is concerned with two strips of celluloid. The simplest method is to join the strips together; then we have the commonest form of change of viewpoint: the cut. If the cut is obvious, if it intrudes on the spectator he will feel he is being jerked from place to place; as Raymond Spottiswoode puts it, "the whole value of the cut lies in its imperceptibility."<sup>1</sup> The variations on this method of change are all more perceptible and may be used for certain positive effects: the dissolve, wipes, etc. In television you are not joining two strips of celluloid but changing from a camera in one position to another in a different position. This is only possible, at the moment, by a fade-out fade-in process: one picture becomes fainter as the next becomes stronger. In films this is only used occasionally to mark a definite termination of one incident or sequence and the commencement of another. The speed can be regulated in television but the change is always definitive and it is not equal to the imperceptibility of the cut. At the moment the definitiveness of the change is a very severe limit to the viewpoint side of television; possibly technical advances will alter this. In any case it is a fundamental part of the technique as will be seen in a moment in relation to time.

Second: movement. This includes the content of the play which, we have already seen, must be governed by considerations of intimacy. On the stage physical movement is seldom important: two characters can sit at a table and talk and the drama and action are wholly in their talking. Filmed, this would be dull and tiring, the essence of a film

<sup>1</sup> *A Grammar of the Film.*

is movement and if a film does not move, it fails to hold the attention. Television again comes somewhere between stage and screen, nearer, I think, to the stage since the greater intimacy produces a greater sense of actuality so that a long stage dialogue would televise better than it would film.

Inextricably bound to movement are the time and space in which that movement takes place.<sup>1</sup> On the stage, contrary to what one would expect, time, the medium for movement in thought and emotion, is free, boundless. The characters at the table can discourse on abstract problems, plunge into the depths of philosophy and still maintain dramatic excitement, the sense of tragedy drawing near. On the films, on the other hand, movement in time is absolutely bound to movement in space and cannot be considered apart from it. Space on the stage is, as we have seen, limited during each scene. On the screen movement in space is the essence : not only do persons and objects move through space but space itself is plastic, changing, dissolving, re-emerging, as the editing of the separate shots sweeps the spectator along as the director desires. This new freedom, however, carries with it a negation of movement in time ; the film's movement in space is, in reality, "a dynamic combination of comparatively static units."<sup>2</sup> Each separate shot, whether it lasts for a second or a minute, is bound to that time, any attempt at movement in time, unaccompanied by movement in space is practically sure to fail : a solitary character soliloquizing is a boring impossibility.

Summing up this rather difficult comparison, we may say that we have in the stage a fixed viewpoint from which the spectator sees movement in a limited space with infinite movement in time, the whole in a continual state of flux, every transition, from one state or position to another, apparent. In the cinema a variable viewpoint with continual movement in time and space which is, in essence, a discontinuous series of static units, each with an absolutely bound and finite time, the whole dynamised by the rhythmic editing of the units.

And here we return to what I said earlier : each single shot or unit of a film is completely separate, each is a strip of celluloid and may be made before or after and completely independently of the one which precedes and the one which follows it. Not so in television : each shot must occur here immediately after the one preceding it and immediately before the one following. Thus in television we have the same continuous state of flux we found on the stage, only the viewpoint may change, the scene may change, with greater frequency.

This approach, coupled with the necessity for intimacy and actuality, gives a starting point for the consideration of television material. It is theoretical, it may become nonsense in the face of new technical discoveries ; for the moment it attempts a very, very tentative clearing of the ground.

<sup>1</sup> See Erwin Panofsky . *Style and Medium in the Moving Pictures*, transition No. 26 for a fuller account of what follows.

<sup>2</sup> Spottiswoode v.s.



## REVIEWS OF RELEASES

PARNELL. (Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Empire. Director, John M. Stahl. Screen play by John van Druten and S. N. Behrman, from the piece by Elsie T. Schauffler. With Clark Gable, Myrna Loy, Edna May Oliver, Edmund Gwenn, Billie Burke, etc.)

THEY SHOULD NEVER have seen *Green Pastures*. Clark Gable, slightly more miscast as Parnell than would have been Groucho Marx, can do nothing but base his performance on Rex Ingram's De Lawd. That set the tone for the film. No doubt about it, Hollywood determined to do right by Parnell, and the film has all the marks of a reverent undertaking, which occasionally beset even the best commercial studios. Everyone is very understanding, very long-suffering. As Gladstone wasn't, he isn't much in the picture. Politics are simplified, voices are subdued, and out of it all comes the plea for the right of a man to the woman he loves. We seem to have heard this before, and intrusion of this phrase and outlook destroys the carefully built-up atmosphere of nineteenth-century London. Little else need be said, except that Myrna Loy, is as usual, the "perfect lady". Kitty O'Shea was also a woman of character, so Loy misses rather badly. And somehow, I couldn't feel that Mrs. O'Shea would ever have had Billie Burke as a sister.

UNDER THE RED ROBE. (New World. New Gallery. From the novel by Stanley Weyman. Director, Victor Seastrom. Photography, Georges Perinal and James Wong Howe. With Conrad Veidt, Annabella, Romney Brent, Raymond Massey, etc.)

THE CAMERAWORK of the Frenchman, Perinal, and of the Chinese, Wong Howe, make this picture pleasant to watch. The characters of Richelieu and of Gil de Berault, as conceived by Weyman, make the central figures difficult to appreciate, and I found that Veidt's clipped accent robbed several scenes of some force. It is, further difficult to have German-English playing opposite Annabella's extremely French French-English, and feel that both are equally French. Moreover Annabella seems to have trouble with some of the words, as if she is reading them off a blackboard, and that does not make for conviction. It should be added that the best performance comes from the young Mexican, Romney Brent, whose American accent is scarcely noticeable. The Swedish director of this new British film has made this romance of Richelieu's days somewhat ruminative. A little less intelligence, a little more swashbuckling might have made the whole business more vigorous. But it is good to see again the Seastrom gift—he uses exteriors as much as possible, and does familiar things with light on trees. It is good to notice, and to remember one had forgotten, his use of flowers. Which was his last picture, *The Scarlet Letter* or



Garbo's *Divine Woman*? Ten years or more ago, both of them—and that is too long. Here again, though cramped by the story and some of the acting, is Seastrom working with light and earth and mist, and figures among them—and it is pleasant to see Veidt again among these. The film doesn't measure up to modern standards, but it is a pleasant reminder of that Swedish cinema there once was and is no longer.

MOONLIGHT SONATA. (Pall Mall Productions. London Pavilion. Director, Lothar Mendes. Photography, Jan Stallich. Sound, C. K. Medlen. With Paderewski, Marie Tempest, Charles Farrell, and Barbara Greene.)

IF THE SCENARIOS of films were boldly set down, it would be difficult for future ages to see why some films were funny and others weren't. The story of *A Day at the Races* is not very funny. The girl is failing to make the sanatorium pay, her sweetheart buys a race horse in order to save the position with his winnings. The story of *Moonlight Sonata*, on the other hand, is very funny. Perhaps the funniest thing is that it should have been written. A famous pianist makes a forced landing in Sweden on an estate where the girl is unable to decide whether to marry or not. His playing brings her to her senses (taken, we assume, for granted) and that, as the saying goes, must be why artists were born. In other words, that is why Beethoven wrote the *Moonlight Sonata* and why Paderewski is a great pianist. At any rate, these are the only reasons for those facts which the film provides. It may be said that Marie Tempest plays fairy-godmother and, of course, Paderewski plays the piano. The film does give him serious consideration in this, but it is interesting to compare the scenes of his playing with those of Harpo, and to reflect why much more insight were given to the latter.

A DAY AT THE RACES. (Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Empire. Director, Sam Woods. With the Marx Brothers, Margaret Dumont, Maureen O'Sullivan and Allen Jones.)

FOR DAYS AND nights a young man and a young woman career across America in a car whose tyres never wear out. They live on stolen cans of food, and when they want anything, they heave a stone through a shop window and take it. This is not the theme of a Marx Brothers' film. It is the climax of Fritz Lang's new picture. I describe it because it shows how much more improbable than the Marx Brothers' nearly every other film is. The Marx's don't make improbable films. You have only to consider the trio, and you realise that nothing else could possibly happen. Just why Maureen O'Sullivan should run the sanatorium or why one of the patients should insist on being looked after by a horse-doctor, it is not for us to consider. But we are not

asked to consider : whereas in *You Only Live Once* there are lots of things we are supposed to consider, and they don't bear consideration. As to *A Day at the Races*, it takes a long time before we get to them, and when we do, perhaps they are not as funny as we expect. That is one of the secrets of the Marx's success. None of their gags is as funny as the way they lead up to it. We are prepared for something terrific, we are already laughing in anticipation—and the Marx's cut it short. They leave us having imagined something slightly funnier than they have themselves. That is their skill, for we are left very pleased with ourselves. There are differences between this film and their previous pictures—less destruction, more singing, and an interlude of astonishing camera work, whilst Groucho, himself, shows awareness of concessions to sentiment. But the whole thing is as complete a relief as usual, for nothing goes right, and we know that it is only by expecting things to, that they go wrong.

FAREWELL AGAIN. (London Film Productions. Leicester Square Theatre. Director, Tim Whelan. With Leslie Banks, Flora Robson, Sebastian Shaw, etc.)

THIS NUMBER STARTED as *Troopship*. One of the few flashes of inspiration had by anyone connected with the film was that a bit of high jinks below decks really could not be called *Troopship*. An odd ship it was, dithering about from Gibraltar to Southampton in a way which made Bligh's trip in an open boat seem a *Normandie* crossing. The ship apparently did without sailors, and meals didn't play nearly as important a part as the nurse's change of wardrobe. Supposed to have the Pommer touch, it's one of those pictures which progress by giving cross-sections. All those to do with the officers are taken with the seriousness which class and custom dictate (*sic*) and those to do with the troops are burlesqued. The lower classes, both military and civil, exist as jokes, and the comedy high-light of the picture is the birth of a baby to the sergeant's wife. But to me the funniest thing in the picture was the assumption that when a regiment only has six hours' leave in port, it spends it quite happily in a customs shed turned into a canteen. Why didn't the producers ask the hotel keepers and apartment landladies what happened on these occasions? It also occurred to me that if Flora Robson had sold some of the diamond bracelets which, it was encouraging to find, a British colonel could afford to give his wife, she might have been cured of her mysterious and embarrassing disease. But had this been done, we would have missed the funniest part of a film, always comic when it was not insulting, and a combination of both was reached when Leslie Banks, very undrilled-looking, told his men that they must not mind being ordered abroad immediately, because, regimental ties and all that, and dammit all, I'm leaving my

wife to die in England, so I know what it is to play the game. The trouble is, the game changes; but when the old social order has given place to new, *Farewell Again* may possibly have some interest as a record of the outlook which made that necessary.

THE HIGH COMMAND. (Fanfare Production. Plaza. Director, Thorold Dickinson. Camera, James E. Rogers. With Lucie Mannheim, Lionel Atwill, James Mason, etc.)

LUCIE MANNHEIM CAN never be a heroine; she is too much a refugee actress, and that means her first suit is to prove she's different from Bergner and that Dietrich isn't unique. We know that. We know also that Lionel Atwill is never up to any good, especially as a husband—and that lands us with James Mason. An actor who has charm without chi-chi, he is becoming taped as the English Mr. Deeds. That would be O.K. if there were an English Capra. There isn't. If Dickinson were, he wouldn't have to film such a story as this.

He has filmed it very well. He has filmed it so well that, though Paramount put it on, being an English film, at the worst time of the year, the Plaza was not only filled, but held, whilst *The High Command* happened. Dickinson hasn't been able to get over a trite tale, the type casting spoils his effects—but he has made a routine job interesting, often exciting, and produces a film which is not only entertainment, but which can be watched with profit for its use of dissolves, wipes, and sound effects.

## SHORT FILMS

CONGA. By Len Lye. TRADE TATTOO. By Len Lye. FULL FATHOM FIVE. By Len Lye.

THE LAST OF these films has for sound a speech from *The Tempest*, delivered by John Gielgud. It is not true to say that it is an illustration of Shakespeare—unless you are willing to concede that a figure 5 floating across the screen is illustration of the opening line. Nor is it true to describe it as an evocation of similar visual images. Probably I don't know at all what it is, but it seemed to me a pouring out of image and association which leaves a feeling of magic, an underlit underwater quality, which the verse has. But in a manner quite different. It is rather like the speech being made, there is mind-movement in the shapes, mind-pictures in the occasional flashes, inserts, of actual photography. There isn't the manner of *The Tempest*, there isn't the appearance. There is, though, a similar feeling.

The other films differ from it, and they differ from each other. But they all show stages in Lye's use of film. *Trade Tattoo*, you might think, was the familiar dull cutting to get rhythm. But it wasn't that.

It was the sense that everything is in rhythm. When you are happy and well, you no longer feel that things are going against you. They are going with you, or you with them—quite literally. I mean, you feel part of the flow, part of the beat of pistons, waterfalls, ticket-punches, rains, brakes, clouds, whatever you happen to see. You are in their movement, and they do not affright you by seeming to cut across yours. Factory chimneys, towers, uprising birds, walls—these no longer oppress, when you are well. They soar. This feeling of belonging with that, of fulfilling an inner beat, comes in Lye's film. All of them show how he is getting down deeper and deeper, and doing that by elimination of detail, by detail made to carry as much significance as possible. One thing only shown—but that one thing essential, expressive, final. Eliminating all that is unnecessary, all that we have to clear away from our sight before we can see. The result is, or will be, not a film which is close-up *tout simple*, but a film which, in a sense, makes close-up unnecessary, because there is nothing needless to see.

R. H.

## REVIEWS OF BOOKS

## I SING DEMOCRACY

By SYLVANIA PENN

WHITMAN<sup>1</sup> WAS OF English stock, Quaker, and Low Country Dutch, typical racial blend of New York State and its neighbour, Pennsylvania. He sang, as we all know, "the body electric," his own and that, by identification and projection of personality, of his country, a composite of nations, America. His "tan-faced prairie boy", however, of the *hinterland* of the far west, is no more "American" actually, nor in fact as much so, as the deeply rooted, autochthonous stock from which, actually, he sprang, and which the author of this book is at great pains to point out is not typically "American". An almost unsurmountable difficulty presents itself. Any intelligent critic of this or any purposely "American" work, must or should immediately endeavour to define, almost from the French eighteenth-century point of view, the term "American." To begin, we are confronted with that curious, persistent myth, "the tan-faced prairie boy" of story-book legend and of Hollywood producers. This "prairie boy" is as dear to me as to anyone, and I agree his *vertù* should be glorified. But not at the expense of simple facts, of truth, that raw and naked divinity of New England antecedents, whose devotees had a way of cropping up all along that sea-coast. Yes, it is a grim and tyrannous divinity and has picked, with discrimination, victims or martyrs, beginning with Emerson, going on through neighbouring New England states, down through Dutch New York and the so-called Dutch of Pennsylvania, on to Virginia, where we meet its highest cerebral apostate or apostle, Edgar Allan Poe. These are native roots; if you will, they are transplanted from the continent of Europe, but there they are, there they stand, a sort of thin line of intellectual heroes, breakwater, to be beaten upon alike by European and by western and mid-western critical and destructive forces. They have been founded, for some time now, on the rock of higher English and French criticism, and it would take a good deal more than a posse of rough-riders or prairie boys from this or the other side of Spoon River, to dislodge them. Mr. Masters, however, sallies forth against the whole lot. No, not the whole. One, he spares with condescension; Emerson for some reason is to remain "American" because of some outstanding quality of spiritual sincerity. The rest, later growth, he claims are due to perish, geological peaks or even, you might think, plague spots; anyhow they are left high and dry in sterility, yet not quite extinct.

<sup>1</sup> *Whitman*. By Edgar Lee Masters. Scribner. 12s. 6d.

They should be, or soon will be, according to the prophet of Spoon River.

Mr. Frost and Mr. Robinson are anathematized by name, the rest by inference. The whole "eastern school" is in like predicament. These "specimens" (and God pity them—they are that), instead of accruing, at long last, the laurels, due the dead obeying orders, Spartans at Thermopylae, are to be cast out, body and soul, from the land of their fathers, the living matrix "America", as geological deformities, sterile peaks, left high and dry by the living, retreating tidal wave of Spoon River.

Our Walt is not to blame for this, poor darling. He took one look at the west—this exalter of the farmer, the mechanic, the tan-faced generally—and slouched back home, lazy loafer who "invited his own soul". His job in New Orleans was not typically to his liking; even the wide, comfortable bars of that city of Latin pleasure did not hold him. Slow-going city of levees, of vivid and exotic cargo from the south, the far south, city of famous high-born belles and most beautiful creoles (waltz and crinoline, fragrance of native wax-white oleanders, orange-blossom, islands of magnolia), did not hold him. No lotus-temptation this. Simply Walt was lazier than New Orleans. Something flashing, gem-like, quick and agile, that darted in and out, humming-bird—no, he didn't like it. West indeed! Walt took a steam-boat back up the Mississippi, cut across, by canal, somewhere to the lakes, and this trip, the banks of this mighty river, the out-jutting rocks where Indians had fought but lately, tortured one another and been in turn tortured by the white man, held little worthy of his notice. At least, with the exception of a few personal letters and observations, he says practically nothing of this truly impressive waterway, except for the times and places of various boats, and all of those nosing homeward. Great, wide-winged, sea-soaked Albatross, having got to the south-west, with all the vast panorama of the mid-west and the far west to tempt him, back he floats, typically, the whole way on river and lake boats, and lands, by way of the Hudson, on a New Jersey mud-flat. He chose this unimpressive town for the simple reason, as he states it, that it was on a wide tidal river, the Delaware, opposite Philadelphia, sixty miles from the sea, where he could hear the gulls.

So Rip Van Winkle comes home with premature, impressive, white-bearded head and shaggy, fine hair. His skin was young, we are told, and contrastingly delicate, without wrinkles. . . . Here, this lazy loafer, this Dutchman, this Quaker, this Long Islander, this Camden New Jersey home-product, autochthonous, if anyone ever was, an "American", gave us those immortal "leaves", not shining laurel, it is true, but fragrant, simply "of grass". Of far-west prairies he might sing, but his leaves are from his own home-meadows, those sea-pastures he speaks of, his grandfather's vast acres of Long Island, fragrant,

living, with reed-stem or hollow blade, or succulent and rich, to be plucked and bitten into, or simply to be savoured as that word "salt hay" he uses. Salt hay—there is the whole story. Here is the clue. Here is that throb and pulse, of necessity alas, lacking in the tempo of Spoon River. *Passa Thalassa Thalassa ti.*

Ever the sea is the sea.

Having dug himself into his sand or his mud banks, Walt was cosmically free to face anything; the west which his body had rejected became now the love of his spirit. Truly he has extolled the unbeaten tracks, the vast meadows of the Dakotas, the Nebraskas, Wisconsin, as an early Wagner, the gods of his Ring, undisturbed by conventional musical notation. The vast surge beat through him. But for all the pseudo exaltation of the body and his claim of originality (he didn't want piano tunes), he derives blatantly from his own early adventure-books, Scott and Cooper. His are literary derivatives; his frame was that of an archaic Triton; for all his open disregard of so-called convention, he was in a tradition, a step onward, westward if you will, in the ladder of cosmic (his word) development. He is not alone either. Abraham Lincoln stands beside him.

Here now is our true westerner, to measure in breadth and stature with this other. A wide-winged eagle this, and truly democratic and truly "American". Of that, there can be no question. Lincoln took his strength from the inland, mighty river, symbol that drastically divided yet joined his country, the Nile of this western continent, and Lincoln was Egyptian, Red Indian, of impressive stature, beaked Hawk, Eagle, desert Vulture. Lincoln was spiritually of the land, the deserts of the far west, and he would have kept one (as an Egyptian, dependent on the flow and flux of his river), the whole land. North and south were watered by the father-of-waters, Mississippi, east and west took bounty of its tributaries. Egypt had its upper and lower kingdoms, frequently at variance. So, too, America. North and south must be one, no one must secede from the bounty of the rivers. Democracy? Lincoln, the westerner, carried his dream through, as a pioneer hacks through field and forest, regardless of anything but a goal; he acted a dream. Walt Whitman merely lived one.

Perched on his solid rock, within sound of the immortal sea, our Albatross is Greek really. He shrieks across America. His note may be high-pitched at times and raucous as a pea-hen, but back of it is the authentic "surge and thunder of the Odyssey". Abraham Lincoln, desert hawk, American eagle, spreading wide wings from mid-America, over north and south, becomes, alas, instrument of a grim Aesculean fate; he asks an answer from his oracle, which he follows. *Ai-ai*, alas. Autochthonous race conscience is still crying for its true-born children, its hearths, its gods, that fine cult of Louisiana, Carolina, the whole that Europe includes in the term, "the sixties." In a space of years of

almost identical duration as our so-called "great" war, a civilization was wiped out. Descendants of old France, mixed noble and creole Spanish, buccaneers of Elizabethan tradition, slave-traders but technically in the right, regarding their claim to individual freedom of each individual state, were beaten, flower of 1860 romantic chivalry, off the map. Sherman's march to the sea, black war-cloud of pillage and plunder, could be fitly celebrated only in Aesculean or Euripidean threnody. Over it, however, hovered the "American", the characteristic, pure backwoods type, bleak and solitary vulture, Hero if you will, truly Promethian bird of ill-omen, of fate. Lincoln clawed back his *e pluribus unum*, the defeated secessionists, to find the prey lifeless, inert, of no more value. Carolina, Georgia, Virginia are the Trojan chorus of slaves, of authentic classic tragedy.

So far, so good.

But Walt?

No. He was not only, truly, a westerner. (Long Island, New York, Mr. Masters tells us, was really "the west".) He was a cosmic spirit, in that, ridiculously and truly "American", but dog-gone tired. He had this in common with the New England transcendentalists, he turned inward for his inspiration. For all of his seeming extroversion, he lived in his own dreams. These dreams were, it is true, the antithesis of his contemporaries'. The so-called New England mind is focused, Walt spelt diffusion. Both, however, drew from the same source, the sea, on the one hand, its mighty billows, the "surge and thunder", and on the other, the sparse, geometric precision of those white and rose-pink shells, cast up by that same tide. New England and its derivatives or counterparts along that vast coast were "narrow" but "narrow" as an Ionic column is narrow or a beech-tree or a birch-tree, stark outlined against a snowy heaven. Yes, there it is all snow. Walt flung his exotic so-called sex profusion out toward the *hinterland*; Emerson, Emily Dickinson, and farther down the coast, Edgar Allan Poe, were content to delineate pearl and shell of their inner spiritual findings.

Robert Frost is "American", Emily Dickinson is "American". Sea-shell is "American", if cast on that shore, if found imprinted in that sand, no matter from what coast it has been born by the change and chances of tide or of tropic gulf-stream. An Irish immigrant from Kansas City of one generation or a Polish or Swedish miner or navvy from Milwaukee or from Saint Louis is surely less "American" than the rooted early settlers of the Atlantic sea-coast.

Marianne Moore, with again a clear lens-like Dutch perfection of technique, is "American". There is the great mountainous, uncharted matrix, truly, but the gem, that is formed or forms painfully by the inner law of its being is surely as truly, if not even more authentically, child of the original sub-strata. Take it, that there is the gem, or the gem-school, Emerson, Poe, Frost, Marianne Moore, and the vast



enclosing matrix, personified by Walt and if you will, his followers. But why these quarrels over mere geographic or geometric boundaries? The north and south of Walt's time, all but exterminated their authentic children. Must invidious intellectual barriers be set up in our day, dividing east and west, as formerly, to their bitter self-destruction, separated north and south? Must a new Spoon River vulture rise to wail our doom? No. Even Spoon River finds its way eventually to the sea, and heaven forbid that I should belittle Mr. Masters' scholarly and stimulating contribution to the history of thought and to the English language. In particular, his historical résumé of the country's vast, disheartening struggle, to use a term applied to Europe during the "great" war, its suicide.

America had its "great" war. Mr. Masters outlines the history of that war and its aftermath so graphically, so concisely, and so humanly, that he has given me a *pied-à-terre*, a little ledge of the crescent of the Atlantic shore, to squawk from. A distant and febrile squawk from one resident, for a quarter of a century, away from that shelf of sand and shingle. But some of us stepped, as Walt stepped, back, in order to see forward. We view with devotion the course of that civilization whose *e pluribus unum*, in Walt's day, wrecked its finest culture, destroyed its most fragrant heritage.

Myrrh, aloes, cinnamon and spices . . . it is all kept somewhere in an ivory casket. On that alabaster or that ivory box is written,

*Helen, thy beauty is to me*

*As those Nicæan barks of yore . . .*

and so on. Garnering strength for a fresh bud of exotic beauty, Poe wrote himself to death, you might or might not say. At any rate, he died at the height of his powers, at the age of forty, and it was at about that age, or soon after, that Walt began his writing. Whitman, broken in health from pernicious virus, gangrene contracted from one of the many youths of both north and south he tended, began his authentic utterance. Vast Albatross . . . no, we did not, would not shoot the Albatross.

But let Spoon River try to understand, to assimilate another sort of valour. Let Spoon River recognize the courage, the isolation, the insulation of the gem-soul that draws inward, true to its own law of being, to perfection, drawing too heavily on its physical strength to preserve its incandescent *vertú*. There is courage of outward definition, of the prairie boy school of thought. There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, et cetera. And Walt's is the glory of the sun, the externalized thing, as Poe's is of the Moon, the internalized. Frost, speaking generally, is of these gem-souls, as is Marianne Moore. True, and here we sympathize with Mr. Masters, there is something almost sinister in the way the sapphire rejects the rough body of the

rock, utilizes water, dew, whatever it is it uses, draws on the finest atoms and then by way of answering back, when we accuse it of selfish pandering to dead cults, to "mere" technique or what-not, humiliates us by that non-argumentative silence, that most impertinent of answers—no answer. It simply goes on shining.

From time to time, along that east sea-coast of America and not far inland, there springs up one of these strange incandescent forces or crystal centres for the focus of prismatic thought. Poets, lighthouses, outposts of some inner psychic civilization, an emerald, a white crystal, a jacinth ("thy hyacinth hair, thy classic face"). Inner valour, isolation, insulation is required for this burning up, this cerebral flaming in a vacuum. Small lights they may be, but steady. They throw their rays far. Agate lamp, maybe; ivory tower, it may be. But light-bearers, in their cycle, perfect. It is valorous to create. Walt Whitman created a continent. Abraham Lincoln, a war.

## RECOGNITION NOT FAREWELL

By BRYHER

I READ *Angèle au Couvent* and, because of identical experience, wrote. It must have been March, blowing and rough for Florence, when a cab came beside the Arno, stopped, and my first, my lasting impression was of Mary's hair, flaming and red, no Tuscan scarlet but the torque-gold of windy islands.

There were weeks when we met every day. It was light when I walked along the river to her room, but eastern dark, the perched chimneys seeming minarets, when I returned. I heard the outline of *The Crystal Cabinet*<sup>1</sup> then, told, not written, history handed down as in the tenth century the skalds taught it. (Who has noticed that there is a spoken, as well as a visual, quality in Mary's work? We call them stories because of the way they are printed, actually they are poems.) Of course, the book is more static than the tale, for writing it, Mary had desperately the need to record her experience while time lasted, whereas in 1924, in Florence, we both smelt laurel, felt we had the right, even the obligation, to be reckless.

I didn't know Dorset. I had passed through it but my country was west, west even of Cornwall, the Scillies; these, perhaps, were simply stepping stones to the States. I could see the Persian bridges against the majolica hills yet with all the power of Italy about us, those evenings all that mattered was the region of Mary's childhood. Here was someone who so loved England that her chance words could push away one of the world's most famous landscapes, yet nobody has commented on this quality, she is not recommended in the lists

<sup>1</sup> *The Crystal Cabinet*. By Mary Butts. Methuen. 10s. 6d.

of English authors distributed to foreign universities, she is unheard of in any school (for immortality this is just as well), and one reviewer even found her Dorset dull. The city amused her and she loved Paris, she was no false nationalist believing that praise of another land could harm her own, but she loved her woods and sand so utterly that I can still see them (rather than hear her speaking); turning the chapters over I feel cheated, for the hours, the pictures, she has chosen to leave out.

I do not know if we can speak, with poets, of tragedy or doom? They have their own reward. Yet when the notices of her death refer to a distinguished young writer, is silence possible? Mary was young but she was not distinguished, no, never in that grudging sense; she was from the start one of the few who matter, a builder of English, and I have never doubted since I read her first story that she belonged to the immortals.

Nor do I think that she had much more to do. Her last work already repeated itself. If people are as blind to the quality of her mind as most of the reviewers have appeared to be, what else could she have done to make her readers believe in her? Her mixture of clarity and metaphysics, of charity and intolerance, made easy fame impossible. They speak of her use of English; it was superb, but the day of the *mot juste* is past. I should not feel so easy if we had to rely for her living upon the way she made her sentences. What she had, more than most other writers, was pity and understanding and a new to literature sense of the psychological nuance of emotions exaggerated or created by the war.

*The Crystal Cabinet* is the least difficult book that she has written, a dictionary for us to look up references, for to understand Mary we must examine history and perhaps she will forgive me this once (later we were on opposite political sides and so as not to quarrel, did not write) if I speak of her relationship to her time.

When Mary was born, England was at the full flower of the industrial age. It had developed a culture, false to-day but not necessarily false then. There was a tradition usually honoured, of responsibility towards the less fortunate, of truth and respect for principles. It is true that it shut its eyes to industrial abuses and was frankly imperialistic but at least it would have prevented the Abyssinian fiasco and the attempted blocking of aid to shell-pursued refugee children; it was less corrupt than the political generation (not party) succeeding it in power and its programme was coherent if narrow. On the other hand, the close of the nineteenth century was a black moment for women. They had not the responsibilities of the time when everything from bread and jam to cloth was made at home, nor the modern opportunities for education and movement. Repression's usual end is selfishness and the result was a generation of frustrated lives whose aim was to keep opportunity and progress from their children.

We shall find in Mary's work a revolt against the attempt made by school, family, or world to keep her from knowledge, to ban as "dirty" or "morbid" all learning not of strictly conventional pattern, while she had absorbed from her surroundings a fanatical belief in truth that no contrary experience was to shake; disastrous equipment for a society where survival depended largely upon the ability to disguise or to fake the answer temporarily demanded.

To go back to the beginning. In the early nineteen hundreds, so many harmless things were forbidden us. We might not feel water nor sand nor earth, when "two kinds of drawers and two kinds of petticoats, a pinafore and serge frock imposed, as I can still remember, a very real strain on one's vitality". Prohibitions were imposed for whose reason we might not ask. We were pruned of every form of self-expression, like the single flower on an exhibition stem, until everything in us went into a single desire, freedom, which we saw only in wind or in the breaking waves and as we could not hold these, into what was nearest to them, poetry. I do not think that the present generation feels literature as we did. They love it, of course, but they have no need of our intense and concentrated passion. They sunbathe at two, have some of their questions answered. It was, however, the sign of our age, the identification students will tag to us, when we are dug out, as the Elizabethans were in the nineteenth century, after the night of forgetting almost sure to come.

When outside conditions become unbearable people take refuge in what is to be or what was. It is a quite normal state, nothing to be ashamed of, it is, in fact, a sign of our will to live. Naturally, cases occur where it is carried to excess, but we might just as well refuse to go to bed because there is sleepy sickness in Africa, as to deny it in reason. Most of us make up some wished-for future, a few, like Mary, return to an ideal past. Apart from inevitable fears, she had been completely happy in childhood, so throughout her stories there is always the sense of the perfect world before history happened and, as a child can see no deliverance from harsh uncomprehended laws other than a miracle, so it is always some missing word with her that will unlock the gate, explain, make a new realm possible.

There was free, inquiring babyhood, a reasonably kind first school and a father interested in her development; then he died, her mother married again, and though she got on well with her stepfather, there must have been psychological difficulties. At this moment the blow fell that, together with an experience in war, she was never to get over; she was sent from her home, her own landscape, all that was familiar, into veritable exile in a cold and wind-swept part of Scotland, into a school so alien and uncomprehending that a part of her died. Those who understand will read the end of *The Crystal Cabinet*, wondering at her understatement. She forgave (and that was like her) where she

should not have forgiven. Whatever strange and reckless actions happened in her later life, were the direct result of these unhappy, neglected years.

People accept without question the fact that physical illness may leave lasting traces in the body ; why is it so hard for them to realise that the wrong treatment of a child's mind may have far more serious effects ? It is not a single act of recognisable brutality that is harmful but the forcing of immature thought into a mould it obviously does not fit. Neither a country nor a school can be run for the benefit of a minority but in its own interest, civilisation should provide help for the specially gifted child, often a little information or special study prevents all maladjustment. It was an additional tragedy for Mary that she was not a rebel, she would not then have been so isolated, she wanted to co-operate with authority ; her revolt was only against the system that crushed her overwhelming desire for scholarship and insistence that she conformed to a pattern they never even troubled to explain to her.

No wonder that she turned to her home and the companionship of her brother, during the holidays, with too intense a concentration. They were an affirmation that she was not alone, not the last of something that she wanted to preserve, a culture, perhaps, that had only ever existed in the dreams of someone like herself.

"It was at Salterns that the important things happened, and the proper end of this book, a short time after the end of my university life."

The rest was repetition. There was another story, too terrifying to be told. Hints there were, incidents and hours, but it was something that she wanted to forget, that will never now be written. It was one of the nightmares that creep sometimes into her pages, where we feel Mary pause, herself frightened of a dark catacomb way, wondering if the ordinary, companionable world will ever be restored to her ?

It was not easy to be of the minority in 1914 and Mary was a pacifist. With her upbringing, it brought her into conflict with her own loyalties. It would have been so easy for her to have driven a lorry, nursed, broken in mules, done anything other than follow the difficult course she set herself, that flung her into personal loss, extreme poverty, the opposition of people in all the small incidents of life, with air-raids overhead and uncertainty for companionship. Her only weapon was the memory of a childhood world where she had once been happy. In the middle of these years something happened worse than school and that must have revived the shock of it. I do not think that she ever recovered.

A little of it was told but even at the time I had the feeling that she wanted me to forget it. She never wrote of it, only, as I have said, sometimes the feel of it is in the frightening undertone of a dream.

Much is left on the sand. Hooks, pebbles, shells, fish, often in

the wrong places. So the war, when it ceased, scattered exiles and misfits about the capitals of Europe. It might have been kinder to have shot them, row after row, so that there was neither cold to face, nor hunger, nor the intermittent alms they took with a bad grace, being mostly young and not repentant, only bewildered by their fate. It is easy to say that in an ideal world such people could not happen. They were facts, not theories, forming a new kind of underworld, debris of a civilisation. Mary understood, pitied, and did not judge them. She wrote of them without sentiment, knowing that they would take from her as mercilessly as from a stranger, but seeing them as dropped playthings of the gods, always as worth saving. *The House Party* and *Scylla and Charybdis* seem deeper and more important to me than some of her longer novels.

I saw her again in Paris in that "grey and green map, of stone and trams and trees, whose noises were American voice noises and street cars and wind"; under her gayer voice and clothes, I was startled by her detachment. I have an impression of amused eyes watching me being frightened of someone who was a pre-study for Boris (her glorious sense of humour was too seldom in her stories), yet if she were apparent audience for the suddenly born books, the painted intrigues and the foolish hopes of that moment's group, they remained external. She was exploring the new type of emotion for which we have not yet words, we shall grow them in time, and to understand is first a judgment on the self.

We can summarise her work: a happy childhood, this was the background for it all, then loss, loneliness, and shock, a brief moment of uneventful development, war, and again upheaval. She clutched at Dorset and at her brother as a last barricade, attempted readjustment abroad, then found a home in the county nearest in spirit to her own and what was not surprising, in view of her experiences, renewed her early interest in religion. For her there was always the magic land, the visible one that was sometimes an echo of it, the fairy tale people, evil and good, hating and loving, that threatened and protected it.

It is true that she was not "left", nor in any way political, yet her life was communal enough; in spite of her own poverty she was always looking after people. She broke down barriers of whose existence the present generation are unaware (though, with Brecht, she seems to have influenced their work the most), and was left without the strength to push forward into another phase of civilisation. If they will remember this, take her as historian of twenty years and poet of them, from 1910 to 1930, the occasional sentences in her last books that seem surface reactionary, will not disturb them. She was free herself, and in the bulk of her work, from any belief in a society of greed and war.

We met in London for the last time, hurriedly, for we were both going away. I never worried, sometime we should stroll again into

the same room, the saga would go on as if no interval had happened. The final message was prophetic. "The work I was trying to do in Florence never quite came off. I finished it and put it away. Of course, I thought no end of it at the time, but later I saw that it was only 'exercises on a theme'. Since then I've written far more than I've published, than any one will publish, or ever will publish until, maybe, I'm dead."

She wrote her own epitaph in her autobiography: "The kind of poet whose books people will not read until after he is dead, and then they are very, very sorry. (The first half has come so true that one only hopes that the other will follow.)"

The girl she nursed, the boy she kept out of prison, will they remember her, do they even know that she has died? Perhaps I am the last generation to understand fully what she was trying to do, the last to remember the flannel petticoats, the "don't be so morbid, darling", how difficult it was not to be muffled by these and silent; it may be that for a time her conception of beauty will simply seem subversive or incomprehensible. She was too close to the truth of art that is at once Gorgon's head and Perseus, not to come at last to her rightful place. I should have written to her had she lived; as it is, I can only prophesy, wonder what we could give her for memorial, record what I know of her courage, her understanding, and her loyalty, in recognition not farewell.

## (R)EVOLUTION

SOVIET DEMOCRACY. By PAT SLOAN. Gollancz. 6s.

A TEXTBOOK OF MARXIST PHILOSOPHY. Edited by DR. JOHN LEWIS. Gollancz. 5s.

HITLER'S CONSPIRACY AGAINST PEACE. By S. ERCKNER. Gollancz. 6s.

THE POST-WAR HISTORY OF THE BRITISH WORKING CLASS, 1918-1937. By ALLEN HUTT. Gollancz. 6s.

MR. SLOAN MAKES an impudent attempt to explain away the adulation of Stalin current in the U.S.S.R. by the peculiarities of the Russian language. He himself, it appears, "was once unfavourably impressed by the lavish way in which love and faith in Stalin was expressed in public utterances of all types of Soviet citizens. To the English ear such words seemed to be more appropriate to religion than to modern politics, and there is no doubt that I, too, was affected in the same way as the Webbs by this. But my feelings in this matter were completely changed when I happened one day to see a letter from a young worker to his brother. It began, 'Honoured, beloved brother!' Those



were the same words which had been thoroughly unpleasing to me when addressed to Stalin, because in English they suggest degradation and servility. But the young Russian used them to his brother ! ”

The great light that descended upon Mr. Sloan on making this discovery might have been a little dimmed if he had paused to reflect that the flowery style of address used by the young worker to his brother was a legacy from the old *régime* which the communists overthrew. The young worker addressing his brother may no doubt be excused for his lapse. But what about the communists ? Is that the language of the communists who made the October Revolution ? They have been succeeded by communists of a new type who, according to their own organ, the *Pravda* ( “ The Moscow Daily Heil ” ), now refer to their leader as “ the sun from whom we derive all our life and strength ”, etc., etc. Such phrases are not only used by young workmen but by responsible and important officials at Party congresses. Are phrases such as that to be ascribed to the floweriness of the Russian language too ? Instead of writing smug and sententious books about Soviet democracy, Mr. Sloan would be well advised to try and find out why Soviet democracy, the creation of the Russian Revolution, has been replaced by the *Führerprinzip*.

*A Textbook of Marxist Philosophy* is excessively tedious and shows with what ease the instruments of dialectical materialism (the transition of quantity into quality, the negation of the negation, etc.) can be made to prove almost anything if handled with sufficient adroitness.

Mr. Sloan’s book is just propaganda and *Marxist Philosophy* is just bugaboo. On the other hand, *Hitler’s Conspiracy Against Peace* is calculated to make our flesh creep. There is little in it, however, that is new to students of Hitlerism.

*The Post-War History of the British Working Class* is considerably more worth-while. The book certainly satisfied a want. All too few attempts have been made to give us a bird’s-eye view of the recent history of the British working-class movement from a Marxist angle, and though some of Mr. Hutt’s statements are inevitably open to criticism, his book is a useful exposure of the failings of reformist leadership.

ERIC MOSBACHER.

WORLD REVOLUTION, 1917–1936. The Rise and Fall of the Communist International. By C. L. R. JAMES. Secker and Warburg. 12s. 6d.

MR. C. L. R. JAMES has produced a book that it is impossible to refute adequately within a short review, but which is not sufficiently important to be treated at length by a predominantly literary periodical, such as LIFE AND LETTERS TO-DAY. In the June number of *Left Review*,



R. F. Andrews dealt extensively with the misstatements of fact and theory made by Mr. James, and for serious criticism, the reader is referred to that article. It is sufficient here to say that Mr. James is a Trotskyist in Leninist clothing, that he is at pains to claim for Trotsky in his relations with Lenin a continual rightness at Lenin's expense, and in his relations with Stalin the identification of Trotskyism with Leninism. This identification, it must be noticed, cannot be made until Lenin has died and is no longer in the position to disclaim Trotsky as his interpreter.

Marxism is a realistic interpretation of social development past, present, and future. One might be tempted to think that the divergence between Trotskyism and Stalinism arose through the difference in the position of the two authors, that is to say, that Trotsky in disgruntled exile without full possession of the economic and emotional factors (such as morale, endurance, etc.), cannot help but form a very different view of the situation in the U.S.S.R. from the view held by his successor, the ultimate ends of whose policy must be modified by external and internal conditions. But to concede even this degree of integrity to a Trotskyist apologist, who distorts his evidence in the way in which Mr. James has done, is to concede too much.

A. CALDER-MARSHALL.

**PROGRESS AND CATASTROPHE.** An Anatomy of Human Adventure. By STANLEY CASSON. Hamish Hamilton. 7s. 6d.

THOUGH HISTORY MAY not repeat itself, certain elements in the story of mankind may be singled out as making for Progress or Regression. Believing, as he does, that civilization is founded upon social co-operation rather than upon self-preservation, Mr. Casson finds it at this moment to be already in a state of collapse, in that the homogeneous international Europe of before the war has been destroyed by the rise of barbarous and warring nationalisms such as the Fascist and Nazi States. Nevertheless, man has been able to overcome similar difficulties in the past, and, in the free intercourse that still subsists among intellectuals, Mr. Casson sees some possible hope for the future.

This book is an archæologist's contribution to the solving of these problems which face the world to-day in an acute form. He has searched ancient history and pre-history for indications of the causes for the rise and decline of civilizations. Progress is no steady advance but an intermittent process. Thus we follow man's rise from the earliest times—through the control of fire, the manufacture of the first crude weapons, the emergence of art and architecture, the discovery of the use of metals—to the civilizations of Egypt and Mesopotamia. Mr. Casson likens their authoritarian social structure—which made possible the building of the Pyramids—to the Fascist State. Egypt and Mesopotamia were

replaced by the Minoan and Hittite empires, the one founded on sea power, the other on land power. Their fall threatened the whole structure of civilization and Mr. Casson is at a loss to account for the appearance of Homer so soon after such a catastrophe. But even the Greeks with all their intellectual daring could not make civilization secure ; this was left to the material achievements of Rome.

With the fall of the Roman Empire civilization was again in crisis from which it emerged only after a painful process of reconstruction. But, as Mr. Casson points out, the fall of Rome was not due to the Barbarian invasions ; they were but a consequence of her internal weakness. What, then, was the cause ? In his answer to that question Mr. Casson finds a parallel with to-day. " What had happened was that *standards had fallen*. Elements wholly alien to Roman rule and Roman freedom had emerged. In the letters of Sidonius we hear of censorship, of political murder disguised as accident, of bribery and corruption in high places, and even of persecution of the Jews."

HUMPHREY HARE.

THE MIND IN CHAINS. Edited by C. DAY LEWIS. Muller. 5s.

THIS BOOK IS not a symposium. It is a collection of very able introductions to a possible study, from the standpoint of Marxism, of their various subjects. Consequently most are concerned chiefly with showing the inadequacy of any other method of analysis or development than the dialectical method of Marxism. Very few are able in the space at their disposal to do more than clear the ground for future procedure in the field of culture. Alistair Browne, in one of the most penetrating essays in the book, acutely clarifies the whole tendency of psycho-analytical practice. Edgell Rickword in the most solid essay shows pretty clearly that Marxism, contrary to supposition, is only the natural development of a whole English cultural tradition, and disposes of many of the bugbears which have for a long time frightened English intellectuals away from political interest in general and communism in particular. As Rex Warner writes, in a dangerous but apposite sentence, " Nowadays, as has often been pointed out, one need not be a Marxist, one need only be an ordinarily decent person, to approve the immediate practical aims of Marxism." It is to such ordinarily decent persons, who are interested intelligently in the bewildering muddle of the intellectual world to-day, and the fading away into insignificance of all its fugitive brilliant potentialities, that this book will be of enormous gain. For without question it throws open a gate, the gate at which for some years past all the arts have either been rather feebly knocking or sitting down resignedly to munch sandwiches. Here the various strands of cultural activity are gathered up into the general developing complex of life and begin to resume

their vital importance. These writers are accepted as experts in their particular fields, so that there is nothing which is not written from first-hand practical and theoretical experience. Arthur Calder-Marshall, it is true, deals only destructively with the Film as an industry, inhibiting in Capitalist countries all possibility of serious development of Film as Art. And Barbara Nixon's essay on the theatre suffers, I think, from an attempt to draw too immediate a correspondence between the development of the economic basis and its eventual effect on the development of theatrical technique and situation. Only at points of crisis in social development do the reactions in the sphere of ideas mirror at all immediately the reactions in the economic basis of the social structure. Charles Madge, too, only diagnoses the latent influences in the Press and the B.B.C., and hints rather mysteriously at a potentiality for good. I imagine considerable irritation will be aroused in some quarters by the frequent recurrence of such generalisations as "Capitalism in decay", "social and economic forces", "rise to power of a new social class", etc. But such will only be the primitive resistance of individuals who see in socialism nothing but the threat to their present privileged isolation, and can only counter with sneers, against anything connected with the name of Marx, the one line of healthy development in any art or science.

RANDALL SWINGLER.

#### CHRISTIANITY, COMMUNISM AND THE IDEAL SOCIETY.

By JAMES FEIBLEMAN. Allen and Unwin. 12s. 6d.

IN OUR DAY philosophies which are not just the summing-up of what has still to be discovered, the abstract which has still to be made concrete in man's consciousness, do, as Feibleman says, "resemble premature and worthless flights of fancy." Interpretative philosophies, unlinked with practical science, are activities of wish-fulfilment, attempting to construct a synthetic conception of the only metaphysical system which will make our experience tolerable and compatible. Such a philosophy, being nothing more than an arbitrary arrangement of selected concepts, will have to begin by fixing its terminology, and will thereafter be limited by that terminology. In this book, I find Feibleman and myself perpetually hampered by this fact: his criticism becomes largely a matter of knocking down ninepins which the exclusiveness of his own terminology has set up (e.g. actuality, ideal as "telos", dialectic, etc.).

This study in Peircean "Realism" seems to repeat and asseverate all the faults of the earlier "Unlimited Community". Peirce affirmed reality as a logical order of possibility existing unchanged and anterior to things and the perception of things: the order of history was the order produced by action resultant from the imperfect understanding of this universal order of possibility, and was, therefore, the order of

logic reversed, for history was to progress by the gradual cancellation of contradictions, so gradually nearing the straight line of Truth. It is clear that Peirce was here taking the mental condition of apprehension of truth and calling that truth. Had he concentrated upon the concrete mental condition, he might have realised that the logical order of the mind, so far from remaining unchanged and unaffected by action, is developed in interrelation with the process of action, each modifying other in a development which gradually approaches perfect fusion of thought and action, theory and practice.

Feibleman quite rightly sees that the validity of such a universal logical order can only be established on the study of epistemology. And it is here that his ignorance of work done in the fields of Learning and Memory by modern experimental psychologists has betrayed him, and by invalidating his prime postulate, invalidates also his whole case for the "Third Alternative". In effect, the world of ideas is for Feibleman grossly simplified. Recurrently he confuses the philosophy of Christianity with the historical metabolism of the ethics of the various "Christian" churches. Whereas he is quite acute in exposing the contradictions in early "nominalist" philosophies, from the Aristotelian standpoint, he fails to realise that the relation between actuality and its various emergent ideologies is far more complex now than it was in the Middle Ages. The term "nominalism" as applied to the various subdivisions of liberal idealism, is as superficial and unreal as the comprehensive concept of Christianity as applied to the various churches. Feibleman is positively obsessed by this term "nominalism". He has only to apply it to something which he wants to dispose of, and he is satisfied. Of his examination of Marxism it is difficult to speak: he is such a naïf and elementary student. Dialectical materialism is every now and then confused with mechanism, and we come up against the old stop-gap, "Marx was of the middle-class, yet he did not manifest middle-class sympathies," how does that square with your theory of the class-struggle? It is then dogmatically asserted that communism is the doctrine of hate; Feibleman's own definition of the term "actuality" is inserted into dialectical materialism to disprove the belief in actuality as solely real; finally a few blank contradictions of Dr. J. D. Bernal are put in quite unsupported; the term "nominalism" tacked on, and the case dismissed.

The trouble appears to be that Feibleman is familiar with no system but that of Charles Peirce, and consequently does not realize how he is constricted by that peculiarly inverted terminology. It is a pity, because a great deal of thought has gone to the making of this book, and scattered about in it there are random illuminations. But there is in general so much confusion and inversion that it is difficult to see who will find it any help.

RANDALL SWINGLER.

THE PEOPLE'S FRONT. By G. D. H. COLE. Gollancz. 7s. 6d.

MR. COLE is the brain of the Labour Party. Unfortunately the Labour Party executive, under the influence of neurotic obsessions, has lately been acting without reference to any headpiece at all. Now Mr. Cole, with that clarity and thoroughness we have learned to expect from him, has analysed the present position of the Labour Party in Britain, and drawn up his full conclusions of the necessity for uniting all the democratic forces in this country in a People's Front for the execution of an immediate political programme. The result is a book of urgent and immediate importance. Written in the easy discursive style of the habitual lecturer, it might with less haste have been condensed into two-thirds at most of its present length : but it is swift pungent reading and utterly convincing. What is, of course, surprising is that Mr. Cole with his probably unrivalled knowledge of the history of the working-class struggle in this country, should not have foreseen before this the inevitability of that violent resistance to the development of democratic freedom which calls itself fascism. (Not the inevitable temporary triumph of that resistance, but the inevitability of the resistance itself, which makes Communists believe that all lovers of freedom will be compelled in due course to defend that freedom by force, as the Spanish people have been compelled, as soon as its development begins to threaten the domination of capitalist interests in this country.) In one lively chapter is discussed that extraordinary insularity of the English which after the successive examples of political events in Germany, Austria, France, Spain, and underneath their daily observations of the deepening and approaching war-danger, persists as a mystical belief that we are in some way immune from the perils that haunt the rest of Europe. The eloquence of Mr. Cole's chapter on fascism is evidence of the force of the impact with which its threat has effected him. Let us hope that this force will be transmitted to the whole of the Labour Party and to its leaders in particular.

RANDALL SWINGLER.

## FRENCH HISTORY

DIDEROT. Selected Writings. Translated by JEAN STEWART and JONATHAN KEMP. Edited, with an Introduction, by JONATHAN KEMP. Lawrence and Wishart. 10s. 6d.

IT IS AN excellent idea to introduce Diderot to modern English readers, for he is far too little known. His mind was too progressive ever to make him popular with academic circles and due to the reaction after 1800, he has seldom been presented to students in other than a cold and dreary manner. For this reason, we are sorry that in his otherwise excellent

introduction, Mr. Kemp has neglected to give a short survey of the France of Diderot's time.

Three-quarters of the population of France were illiterate when Diderot began to write. There were few doctors, obsolete methods of agriculture, scarcely any schools. The taxation was enormous, the peasants were hungry, and the newly emerging middle class was subjected by the nobles to continuous humiliation. Ignorance was then as always a sure road to keeping mankind in subjection. The party in power fought the spread of knowledge with terrorism and every form of repression known.

Diderot was the leader of the movement to educate, not children but men. His opponents censored much of his work, a good deal was circulated privately in manuscript, as is the case with literature in many countries at this moment. He was thrown into prison for a time and every obstacle was placed in the way of printing the *Encyclopedia*. In spite of this, and through his efforts, a spirit of inquiry began to replace unquestioning obedience. Diderot, more than any other thinker, was the real founder of the French Revolution.

The translators have made a good choice from Diderot's work and the pages read smoothly and easily. It must have been a difficult task for it is extremely hard to turn eighteenth-century French into another language. The same thought runs through most of the selections; it is necessary to examine and experience, to accept no belief for granted. A habit is not a truth nor is anything too small for investigation.

The Editor discusses as well the relationship between Diderot and dialectical materialism. While this will be of great value and interest to many readers, it should not prevent those who are uninterested in politics from reading the book. Diderot is a writer for all time and a study of his mind is essential for those who wish to understand French thought and history. There are few people now who are able to read French easily, and students should find this a welcome introduction to a period the nineteenth century neglected; among his scientific preoccupations, Diderot paints the ordinary life about him, as illustration for his theories, so that we seem in reading him to be watching the events of his time.

BRYHER.

**BONAPARTE.** By Eugène Tarlé. Translated by JOHN COURNOS. Secker and Warburg. 18s.

BOOKS ABOUT NAPOLEON are apt to be either so full of hero-worship that the reader begins to question their accuracy or else they concentrate upon an isolated series of events, leaving the beginning unknown and the end unguessed. This is the first book to be published for a long time

that is impartial and comprehensive. It will serve as an excellent introduction to the Napoleonic wars in general and will also give the specialist opinions of value.

Professor Tarlé is a Russian and his account of Russian policy and of the Russian campaign is the fullest and most interesting that we remember to have read, in any single volume. The story of the Austrian campaign is also exceptionally good. He emphasizes the point that had Napoleon been willing to lead a revolutionary party of the people, instead of identifying himself with the interests of the upper bourgeoisie, the result of the campaign in 1815, or, in fact, of the whole period, might have been very different. It is, therefore, a pity that more space has not been given to the early years. These are dismissed in a few pages, yet Napoleon himself said, "I have fought in 60 battles and I assure you that from them all I learned nothing that I did not know in my first battle." What happened at Brienne and at the military school in Paris to turn the leader so definitely from the prevailing spirit of the time?

A great deal of the apparent mystery of Napoleon's repeated campaigns becomes logical if considered in relationship with his system of "national" and "non-national" economics, the basis of the Continental Blockade. It is amazing also how much of the fundamental basis of the policy of the whole of Europe is outlined, so that it may be easily understood and remembered, in comparatively few pages. *Bonaparte* is a book for any reader interested in history, and I imagine many will be disappointed that no indication is given as to whether the other books by the same author exist in an English translation.

BRYHER.

## WARS, PAST AND FUTURE

WAR DANCE. By GRAHAM HOWE. Faber. 7s. 6d.

THOSE WHO DEMAND a simple analysis of the causes of war, together with therapeutic recommendations, will be disappointed in this book. It gives both less and more. Less, in that Dr. Howe does not try to answer questions, but only to throw some light on the questioner. More, in that he offers a whole philosophy of life, a system—if anything so intentionally unsystematic may be so called—of ethics, almost a religion.

Our main trouble, he thinks, is our obsession for bilateral classification into good and bad. This is the cause of strife. "Our enemy is not in 'evil', but in masquerading 'goodness'." And in particular, our pacifists "morally attached in all directions and with interfering finger more active than observant eye, . . . become involved in all directions in someone else's war". The sole alternative to this

"buccaneering morality" might seem to be a more tolerant attitude of live and let live. But Dr. Howe's metaphysic is not so simple. "If action itself is wrong, it is also wrong to assume that inaction is any better." Here he takes refuge in a geometrical analogy and multiplies his linear scale of values by  $\sqrt{-1}$ . By this means he arrives at a new scale of values at right angles to the old one, and can adopt a positive attitude to both good and evil. "So this is magic, just to live; not trying to alter, with our egotistic sense of self-righteousness and determination, the errors of our enemies and friends. . . . All is illusion; yet, as such, to be loved with inspired courage. There is greater love even than that of laying down our lives for a friend: it is that we should be willing to make this same sacrifice for our enemies also, even for the cause in which we do not believe, for love is truly unconditional."

If his readers find his logic hard to follow, Dr. Howe will not complain. Indeed, he warns them not to "force understanding defensively to consume a certain waywardness, provocative, disturbing, from a source unseen".

ROGER MONEY KYRLE.

DEATH FROM THE SKIES. By HEINZ LIEPMANN. Secker and Warburg. 6s.

THE PRESENCE OF death is always a difficult idea to grasp. There is an exciting quality of sadness, an opportunity for self-dramatisation, and only long afterwards the slow, hungry realisation. The anticipation of death and chaos through war is in a horrible way exciting too. It requires no imagination, this passive expectation of immolation; the words remain words, and the future is a cloud. To admit that such an end is imminent and inevitable is to allow one to lose oneself in an atmosphere of general stupor. To fight against this attitude some indulge in a flurry of noisy dramatics, some attempt to predict futures for peace, or lose themselves in some hidden pursuit; while others are giving their lives in an attempt to stave off the approach of what the world has most to fear.

War is no longer dramatic; in a land which is being hammered by the gradual assault of modern warfare, destruction is incidental and death is a release. By fogging their minds and making machines of their bodies men are already everywhere preparing for what may turn out to be the final struggle against the logic of world capitalist warfare.

*Death from the Skies* contains a great quantity of material, most of which seems convincing enough, although many of the sources are secret. So far there has been no real opportunity for the great powers to try out their new methods of destruction on anything



approaching the scale of which they are capable. There has been no large scale use of poison gas since the Great War. World opinion has prevented even the dictators from adding this recipe to their menu; though the fact that Germany is now importing every year more than twice the total pre-Nazi consumption of arsenic is startlingly significant. The use of bacteriological warfare, as Gorer points out, is likely to be postponed until methods of defence have been perfected against the other, more controllable techniques. Mr. Liepmann displays a thorough knowledge of the different kinds of poison gas, but to me at least his array of facts would carry even greater weight if they were presented in a less sentimentally emotional manner.

JOHN MADGE.

IN PARENTHESIS. By DAVID JONES. Faber and Faber. 10s. 6d.

IT IS THE memories, the emotional residue of past events intellectually altered by experience, which make that experience valuable. But the use, as well as the importance, of association has been generally recognized only since the War. Faced with this book, we meet a pretty problem and I do not myself find that the author has solved it, any more than did the author of *Night Wood*.

David Jones, using on the war the method which Joyce has made possible for authors since it, has made a book of which the heroic scale of writing, the native eloquence and the association, as should be, of present with nearly all times so-called past, have produced a reason for hailing it as "the best of the war-books".

As tribute, one can only say—of which war? For the author, to whom Helen and Quickly are as alive as his left hand and right, reminds us of all wars, by rediscovering each. He did not intend this as a war-book. "It happens to be concerned with war. I should prefer it to be about a good kind of peace—but as Mandeville says, 'Of Paradys ne can I not speken properly I was not there.'" Therefore, our author has "only tried to make a shape in words, using as data the complex of sights, sounds, fears, hopes, apprehensions, smells, things interior and exterior, the landscape, and paraphernalia of that singular time and of those particular men. . . . I suppose at no time did one so much live with a consciousness of the past, the very remote and the more immediate and trivial past, both superficially and more subtly".

This is evoked with a power which it is not within my means to describe. Nor will I quote, since whatever my duty, I find it my pleasure to arouse curiosity and encourage buying. Lovers of literature will not be disappointed. But when the spell has worn off, as spells are made to do, if only the casters would recognize, lovers of literature will find that it is the writing, in prose and verse, which—as style—has chiefly made the spell. Enchanted as we may be, we wake to the dawn—and

this book does not meet it. In the morning which it makes, with the mind's alarum clock ringing we admit, grousingly, that it "does not tell us very much". I may be wrong in expecting that, at this date, any book should. Again, look at *Night Wood*, at least eighteen years behind, not the times, but our awareness of what caused those distant times. After *In Parenthesis*, which speaks intimately from the first line, we find we know no more than we knew. Granted, most books, and perhaps none about the war, tell as much. But David Jones, by his allusiveness, by his awareness of the mind's tides, seems to promise an enlargement of the consciousness which, finally, it is beyond him to give. He has made use of a prose-style which widens it, but himself, he has not deepened. Twenty years hence, how strange it will be that we had to wait twenty years for this to be the "best book of the War".

TREVOR JAMES.

## ANTHROPOLOGY AND NATURAL HISTORY

THE SAVAGE HITS BACK. By JULIUS LIPS. Lovat Dickson. 21s.

PROFESSOR LIPS, of Köln University, set himself the task of discovering the attitude of the coloured man to the white. In communities where the native is denied political expression and the white investigator viewed with the suspicion engendered by contact with other whites, the professor argued that he would find the most open expression of native opinion in art. At this stage he was faced with alternatives. Either he could visit one community and study the whole black/white situation in its widest social and historical context, as did T. H. Harrison in *Savage Civilisation*, or he could collate works of art from many communities, whose only similarity was that they were not white. The former course had the advantage that from the intensive study of the particular a model for generalisation could be made: the latter made possible a greater correlation and contrast, and the material could be collected more easily. And this second was the course Professor Lips chose. He spent the years 1929-32 travelling through Europe and Africa, collecting and examining varied material, and by the end of 1932 he was ready to write his book.

Adolf Hitler became Chancellor of Germany on 30th January, 1933, and the professor's troubles began. Like many of his colleagues, he prided himself on being an impartial scientist, whose work was above politics. But the Nazis knew better, especially the Nazi students under Professor Lips, who hoped that the possession of their teacher's material would give them his learning and position. The Nazis knew

that, however undeveloped the professor might be politically, his work was opposed to the Houston-Chamberlain-Gobineau claptrap of Aryan superiority. And so very soon Professor Lips was up against it. Unlike many of his Aryan colleagues, the Aryan professor valued his work more highly than his salary, and integrity above security. He resisted alone those forces which were persecuting the politicians of the Left, the Jews, artists, writers, and scientists. But without party, he was a very defenceless Daniel: and his opponents were less docile than Old Testament lions. Arraigned on false charges, he lost his job and his pension, and only by discretion and flight did he save his life and the material for his book.

This—described in a foreword—provides the frame of *The Savage Hits Back*. It relates what, to the uninitiated, might be just a picture book with a sympathetic commentary to the modern world in which all thought and action has become in its broad sense political.

The illustrations cover a wide range. From the Bismarck Archipelago come two statuettes of white traders, used for magic rituals to blast their originals, two wizened, agonised bodies with elephantiasis of the testicles. From elsewhere come the absurd or dominating administrator, the kindly or puritanical missionary, the officer, private, and sailor in different moods. There are portraits too, Captain Wilkes and Aldewelt, fantastic likenesses of Queen Victoria and King Edward VII, and models or drawings of white men's tools and machines.

The most striking of all is the Loango sculpture, which Professor Lips describes thus:—

“The central figure is that of a negro who has disdained giving his body the attributes of the white man, a negro without hat or umbrella—things which he now knows to be ridiculous. His body is painted as it was painted thousands of years ago, his face is tattooed, his front teeth filed in native fashion. He stands ready to attack, with a weapon in his right hand. This weapon is not the white man's once adored rifle, it is the native's ancient lance, forged of iron melted in African blast furnaces. . . . On his body this savage wears the container of sacred magic medicine, and his lower limbs are clothed with an apron of native material. His left hand is holding the upper part of a European rifle, but it is not ready for firing. Its butt end is resting on the black man's foot. . . . And there, in European dress, stands a small figure between the black man's legs, a figure seeking protection.”

The difficulty which arises with every illustrated book is to harmonise text and illustrations so that they become an inseparable unit. Professor Lips has not entirely succeeded. In the earlier chapters, there are comparatively few illustrations, and written argument, illuminated by these illustrations, predominates. In the later chapters, however, argument is subordinated to the explanation and interpretation of the plates, continuity is lost, and at best the written word adds to the force of illustrations, while at worst it attributes characteristics or excellences that are not apparent in the photographs.

Yet this book is good value. There are two hundred pictures of

native art, well selected and reproduced : and the commentary is never that of the hack-compiler commonly associated with books of this type. The reviewer found, however, that in the copy submitted to him for review many pages were stuck together so that they could not be separated without damage either to text or plates. He hopes that the copies on sale to the public do not suffer from this irritating defect.

A. CALDER-MARSHALL.

THE SOUL OF THE WHITE ANT. By EUGÈNE N. MARAIS.

With a Biographical Note by his Son and translated by WINIFRED DE KOK. Illustrated. Methuen. 7s. 6d.

NATURALISTS WHO ARE drawn to their subject by delight and sympathy tend to have an urgency of observation which those with a stricter scientific training seldom achieve. Eugène Marais, a South African of multitudinous achievement, had this freshness and intensity of observation linked to a considerable theoretical background. His personal observations of the termite are enthusiastic and revealing. Maeterlinck has popularised the white ant, but Marais had anticipated many of his conclusions. The translator points out that he had suggested the correspondence of the termitary to the human body some years before the publication of Maeterlinck's book ; the two minds are so dissimilar, however, that the point is of minor importance. Where Maeterlinck seeks to bring out the horrific significance of the termite in relation to humanity, Marais studies it directly, for its intrinsic interest. He is perhaps over enthusiastic in his principal thesis, that the termitary approximates as an organization to the human body, but at least it leads him to some startling observations.

He had the extremely rare opportunity of observing a queen for several days in more or less natural conditions. He watched her as she lay hugely swollen, dropping eggs continuously, milked by a horde of workers, guarded by a ring of terrifying soldiers. A piece of hard clay fell on her, "the only effect which the shock had on the queen herself, was that she began moving her head to and fro in a rhythmic fashion. The workers immediately ceased all work and wandered round in aimless groups. . . . Then we saw masses of tiny workers thronging into the palace cavity. They swarmed over the queen in order to suck the fluid through her skin . . . within a few minutes the skin was hanging in loose folds. . . . We visited far outlying parts of the nest . . . all work had ceased. The large soldiers and workers gathered in great excitement. . . . There was not the least doubt the shock to the queen was felt in the outermost parts of the termitary within a few minutes." Then as the queen recovered so did the work of the nest. How far this remarkable incident justifies Marais in his comparison of the queen to the brain is another matter, but the book

is packed with fascinating observation. It may be noted that he does not sufficiently emphasise the extreme variety of termitic organisation, further evidence would be required to reconcile his view with the very varied roles the reproductive plays. Throughout he illustrates his philosophy by examples from other animals with which he is familiar ; these are always interesting. His unfortunate use of " soul " in the title may serve as a guide to his limitations, and certain passages of the book have that " simplicity " usually associated with books for " dear little children ", but they cannot detract from the great interest and value of the book. The translation from the Afrikaans is always smooth.

D. STURGE MOORE.

## ECONOMICS

MAN'S WORLDLY GOODS. By LEO HUBERMAN. Gollancz. 10s. 6d.  
THE ECONOMIC MERRY-GO-ROUND. By EDMUND A. H. WALKER. Allen and Unwin. 6s.

MR. HUBERMAN STATES that he has tried in his book of economic history to explain " why certain doctrines arose when they did, how they originated in the fabric of social life, and how they were developed, modified and finally overthrown when the pattern of that fabric was changed ". It is a valuable book, and, before all else, useful, for it is implied that the outcome of such study of society must be action to change it. Mr. Huberman has written with his eye upon contemporary problems, and it is probably his hatred of Fascism and its drive towards war and his sympathy with the victims of political oppression in the past that have made his book not only a clear outline but also a really exciting narrative. Starting with the early feudal period and interpreting history according to Marxist principles, he exhibits economic theories as weapons with the help of which one group after another changed the structure of society, when that structure had become an obstacle to the use of new methods of production. It is refreshing to be shown the history of a people and not merely that of governments, and to find that the departmental attitude to economic history, which presents it as though it had nothing to do with the every-day life of men and women, is entirely avoided. To some the course of events will appear too inevitable ; it is assumed that men are helpless to refuse to make use of new methods of production and to prevent these changes from altering their moral ideas. This is a criticism which extends to the method which Mr. Huberman had adopted, and though it would be unwise to accept any such interpretations as the whole story, this is the kind of history which is needed at present.

Mr. Walker's book is neither well arranged nor clearly expressed. He attempts to show that since the beginning of the nineteenth century there has been a regular trade cycle of twenty-seven years, "during which there are three phases each of good and bad periods of regularly alternating frequency." The author's reasons for choosing this number are not explained and the proof that his theory fits the facts is too sketchy to carry conviction. His explanation of the cause of the trade cycle is oversimplified, and the suggested remedy for it is not easy to understand—"No simple solution is offered here to the problem, except the advice that in good times put by sufficient reserve to carry over the bad times". There is no hint that the present economic system either could or should be changed.

R. F. F. SUMMERS.

## PHILOSOPHY

PHILOSOPHICAL FRAGMENTS. By SØREN KIERKEGAARD, translated by DAVID F. SWENSON. London: Humphrey Milford; New York: American-Scandinavian Foundation. 7s. 6d.

SØREN KIERKEGAARD. By THEODOR HAECKER, translated by ALEXANDER DRU. London: Humphrey Milford. 2s. 6d.

TILL THESE WORKS appeared the English-speaking public had no opportunity of reading Kierkegaard in English. It takes but little discernment to see in him a penetrating mind of an unusual order. He was a philosopher-theologian with depth of vision, something to say, and a magnificent command of language (to judge by the English version). His work would scarcely be regarded as philosophy nowadays; but whether it be classed as philosophy of religion or as theology, it shows that subject-matter of this kind can be interesting, extremely logical, and by no means so vague as the general attitude towards these things commonly held by thinkers to-day would lead us to suppose.

With a writer like Kierkegaard, to consult the work of the man himself is the only way of gaining an impression of his freshness of style and outlook. I shall not attempt in a brief notice to convey this, especially when Prof. Swenson and Mr. Haecker, who had some opportunity to do so, have both signally failed.

Prof. Swenson's lengthy introduction to the *Fragments* is competently done; but it is suitable only for an audience already fairly familiar with Kierkegaard, and so it is out of place in an English volume at present. Readers will probably find little inducement in it or in Mr. Haecker's Essay to seek out Kierkegaard for themselves. Mr. Haecker sounds Kierkegaard's praises in no uncertain key, which might pass without comment if the reader already knew the man he is asked to admire;

but failing that he has a right to wish to be convinced of the great man's greatness in some more telling manner than by repeated suggestion.

Precision and clarity leave something to be desired in the Essay. Mr. Haecker writes (p. 25): "There is hardly a definition in European philosophy so firmly fixed as the definition of the concept of truth. Open any text-book of philosophy or logic and you will nearly always find that truth resides in the judgment and is the concept of a relation . . ." These are both rather sweeping statements, almost certainly not widely accepted or printed in textbooks. Again (p. 35): "The relation of this dialectic to its objects and truths is quite different from the Hegelian. It preserves and it does not destroy. Once Hegel knows a thing or an object it is really finished with, it exists no more, so to speak, it vanishes in the dialectical process. Not so with Kierkegaard." It is doubtful if this would illuminate many readers, and most Hegelians would regard it as false. It would be unfair to suggest that these statements are typical; but even if they are to some degree exceptional they show the trend of the writing.

J. O. WISDOM.

A HISTORY OF CYNICISM FROM DIOGENES TO THE SIXTH CENTURY A.D. By DONALD R. DUDLEY. Methuen. 12s. 6d.

THIS IS A scholarly, thorough, and competent work. It mainly studies the various Cynics in the different centuries as individual philosophers, and there is, not unnaturally, but little about Cynicism as a doctrine. The appeal of the book is not likely to extend beyond those that are interested in Ancient History: it is written from the matter-of-fact rather than the cultural angle; none the less, certain of the author's conclusions have a wider interest than have the bare facts of history that chiefly occupy his attention.

He emphasises three aspects of Cynicism—some of them usually forgotten in histories of philosophy—the vagrant ascetic life, the assault on conventional values, and literary diatribe. "The Cynics were missionaries, and their message was that life could be lived on any terms the age could impose." This standard of living was the minimum; but it is difficult for us to realize the full import of this, when "in the modern world no one voluntarily lives, as did the Cynics, at subsistence level". The hints thrown out by Mr. Dudley about their later counterparts are very suggestive. The most interesting descendant of Cynicism was Anarchy, which appears in eighteenth-century speculations on the Golden Age. These are "all marked by nostalgia for an imaginary age when man as an individual had the widest scope for achieving happiness, untrammelled by the constraints of the social system". Cynicism made little appeal to the intelligence, but we are

warned on several occasions against thinking of it too literally as the philosophy of the proletariat. The Cynic gradually ceased to shock and became regarded in the light in which we now regard a communist orator—"as part of the furnishings of Hyde Park rather than as a forerunner of the Red Dawn."

J. O. WISDOM.

## BIOGRAPHY

DEFOE. By JAMES SUTHERLAND. Methuen. 12s. 6d.

IN SELECTING THE author of *Robinson Crusoe* as the subject of a biography Professor Sutherland has at the outset at least one advantage. For here is a figure whose treatment hardly demands rescue from oblivion nor too easily succumbs to the plausible use of the superlative which mars so much rebunking. The impression of Defoe as an early exemplar of the nonconformist conscience and the qualities we associate with English Liberalism may be general, but with the advent of this competent and absorbing study it is no longer excusable. The main merit of Professor Sutherland's handling of an intensely active and volatile personality is his skilful avoidance of the disarming tendency to reshuffle the facts to fit some political or romantic predilection. Readily we recognize that we are face to face with a vigorous mind which although endowed with prodigious talent could never rest content with the chimera of literary fame as the goal of its energy. Both Defoe's ardour as a merchant and his sometimes reckless Whiggism cost him the sacrifice of security and contentment, exposed him to constant suspicion, and involved him in litigation and the ignominy of prison and the pillory. The story of these achievements in the face of so many set-backs is little short of thrilling and both the student and the arm-chair fan will find this an indispensable manual. There are copious illustrations and the only defect which calls for attention is the absence of a bibliography.

THOMAS GOOD.

SWIFT. By BERTRAM NEWMAN. Allen and Unwin. 12s. 6d.

MR. BERTRAM NEWMAN has too much sympathy with Swift to have been able to write objectively about him, and his book is a rather cooler example of the work of those biographers who choose a man as a more lucid rationaliser of their own prejudices than they are themselves. The cult of personality in these days of individual repression is the very noisy and rather absurd compensation of it. This might mean that Mr. Newman's book is narrative more than analytical. Unfortunately the necessity of compensation is so great



and this form of it so unlimited that a plausible and "sympathetic" analysis plays in bulk nearly as important a part, and in emphasis a much more important part than the narrative. The admixture of this kind of analysis, which is really propaganda for Mr. Newman's ego, detracts from the very interesting story.

In London and in Dublin, Swift, by conforming to an ideology ("externally") indulged in ingenuously vindictive activities, making him a tremendously useful cross-section through eighteenth century political and sociological life. His early Irish upbringing provided him with sufficient simplicity to become interestedly involved in the business of the age. Backchat in the most diverse forms, abounding with a verve and perceptivity that can be found in our street urchins, was the mode of attack. Cynical and intelligent enough to see what he was doing and naïve enough to want to do it, the Dean was a very lively figure indeed; of all this Mr. Newman writes vividly and with well-sorted detail.

He is unwilling to admit that Stella was the slop-basin of a man too brilliant to be anything but egocentric in such social times, and bilious in one that launched the first consciously evolved schemes for (creative) popular deception. Political and religious quackery was definitely agreed upon as a necessary weapon against the dangers of over-democracy. The bile forced up by his consciousness of himself as a tool, proven by his rigorous code of insult and coarseness to his masters, needed a quiet female receptacle.

Barring a certain tendency to become, true to the forms of present-day biography, slightly hysterical in his appreciation of the Dean's "personality", the book is entertaining; atmospheric and not too intelligent.

PHILIP O'CONNOR.

THE LOST ONE. By MARGUERITE STEEN. Methuen. 12s. 6d.

MARY ROBINSON, (EX-MISS MARY DARBY, of Bristol) started her career as a schoolmistress, and would have been quite content to continue passing on her knowledge of literature, history, and geography to the younger generation; she was, however, not to pursue this calling for long. Her father insisted on an extraordinary attempt to import Eskimos into Labrador and to start whale fisheries on the coast of Greenland. The expedition was not a success, and on his return to England, he took to adultery as an escape from his troubles. Upheaval reigned in the Darby household, the family dispersed, and Mary was rushed blindfold into marriage with a most unpleasant creature by the name of Robinson; after a very short time, the boredom of her domestic life proved too oppressive to be borne any longer and she turned to the stage for adventure and financial independence. Her

exceptional beauty, her friendship with Garrick, and subsequent influence with the contemporary highlights of the profession, helped her to realize this new ambition and she secured herself an engagement at Drury Lane. She became a star overnight, on the strength of her performance as Juliet, which she played with no previous experience whatsoever, but with very great effect. Success led to success, and within the first four years of her apprenticeship she could claim to having played twenty-six parts, nine of them Shakesperean. Her capabilities as an actress were disputed, but her stage personality, combined with her stunning beauty, lovely voice, and graceful carriage, earned her recognition and established her as one of the great box-office attractions of the times. She discarded her somewhat commonplace name of Mary, replacing it with the far more uncommon Perdita, and made the most of her success.

When she played Perdita, the Prince of Wales attended the performance, promptly fell violently in love with her, called himself Florizel, and made her his mistress. Boosted to this new position, she lived in a hectic whirl of glamour, scandal, and gaiety, surrounded by luxury and enjoying the best of everything, until, at the age of twenty-five, she was suddenly crippled with rheumatic fever. Misfortunes piled up, the Prince found a new favourite, Perdita was dropped like a brick from the circles in which she had once figured so prominently, and there was nothing left for her but to retire. Unable to return to her theatrical activities, she summoned up her courage and started at the bottom of the ladder again—this time as a writer, and struggled stubbornly and gallantly for a success not as easily obtained as on the boards. She earned only just enough to keep herself and her child, Maria, alive, and became the authoress of a number of novels, a rather unreliable autobiography, and several books of poems in the "love" and "dove", "flow'r" and "bow'r" vein. She also took up journalism as an extra side-track and contributed regularly to the *Morning Post* under the name of Tabitha Bramble. At the age of thirty, friendless, tormented by disease, and completely forgotten by the world, she died under the most sordid circumstances.

Her whole life was a violent clash of contrasts; there are moments when one cannot help feeling impatient at the constant insistence on her part to have her cake and eat it. Half the time we are lost in admiration for her superb courage and initiative, especially during the last years of her existence, when she descended from luxury to squalor and still insisted on earning her living, refusing to depend on the kindness of others. The other half of the time she gives the impression of being a tiresome, feather-brained, grabbing young woman, out for a good time, even if at the expense of others.

It is most unfortunate that in retelling the story of *The Lost One*, the author should so constantly make use—whether intentionally or

not—of a very roundabout and old-fashioned style, which, although it may conform to Perdita Robinson's literary ideals, is altogether too ornamented for present-day readers, and detracts from the value of the narrative.

PERDITA PENARTH.

EDWARD THOMAS. By ROBERT P. ECKERT. Dent. 10s. 6d.

WHEN THOMAS, HAVING been angry with Bronwen, went out to commit suicide ("Take me with you," said the child. "You don't want to come, you only say it to please me"), he heard a man's voice half a mile away as he went to pull the trigger, and he fired into a stump. On his return " ' Shall I make the tea ? ' his wife asked him.

' Please,' was his only answer.' "

It seems to me that there is not only the explanation, but the expression of the thing which distinguishes Thomas from all those war-time poets save his fellow-countryman Owen—the sensitiveness which had to be translated into action, the response to that sensitiveness which can only be made in the same terms. Actions speak louder than words, and no matter how trivial, show a willingness, sometimes, the more trivial they are, a respect, when words appear only clever or self-consciously sympathetic.

Alas, however, for this book—the quotation is from Helen Thomas, and with such deference as is due to her books, I find it hard to approach, let alone appreciate, a biographer who had not heard of him before them. I have read the book throughout, and I still cannot discover what qualifications the author has of writing about a poet of whom he is content to state that he first met him through a biography, after which his collecting instinct was aroused.

There is such a thing as a love of poetry, and approaching dotage as I may be, I still think it no bad idea for a biographer to come on a poet through his poetry, rather than through volumes which that poetry made publishable. I am grateful to be reminded of the perfect announcement, epithalamium and epitaph—"Remember that whatever happens, all is well between us for ever and ever." But those are Thomas's words, and he has left enough words for us to imagine many others. Those added, where they are added and not culled, by the present biographer, seem to me an impertinence.

TREVOR JAMES.

THE TRAGEDY OF NIJINSKY. By ANATOLE BOURMAN. Hale. 12s. 6d.

IT BEGINS WELL :

"His sinews and tendons were neither stiff nor protruding, nor were his muscular masses clumsy in outline. . . . Yet even the tiny

intracostal masses were delicately visible when he tensed himself, while the nobility of his facial muscles permitted an uncanny adoption of unfamiliar racial characteristics."

Follows some comment on Nijinsky's methods in practice. And, again :

"His back and abdominal muscles were cultivated assiduously by Nijinsky who used a simple exercise during the years I knew him. He used to lie on his back, prone on the floor, his toes caught under a low bar or a heavy piece of furniture, and then with infinite patience he very, very slowly raised himself to a sitting posture and lowered himself with the same slow motion. . . . This exercise is one which I have never seen described as an important factor in Nijinsky's development."

This opening led me to hope for a moment that Anatole Bourman had really written a book about Nijinsky—the first—and not about himself. Quite apart from friendship, he had the distinction of being the only accompanist Nijinsky did not hate. The passages above, you will note, do not speculate on whether the bone-formation of Nijinsky's foot was that of a bird. And, in fact, everything was in Anatole Bourman's favour. Nijinsky's only friend for seven years, the formative years, and himself a good dancer and teacher, he should have managed it. But no. The rest of the book is the familiar kind of anecdotal autobiography. It is unpretentious, "sincere," generous, and occasionally shrewd and certainly well-informed. But it is also very dull and never suggests for a moment that its author is qualified to write on the tragedy either of Vaslav Nijinsky or of anybody else.

RAYNER HEPPENSTALL.

## NOVELS

THE TRIAL. By FRANZ KAFKA. Translated by Edwin and Willa Muir. Gollancz. 7s. 6d.

THE METAMORPHOSIS. By FRANZ KAFKA. Translated by A. L. Lloyd. Parton Press. 3s. 6d.

FRANZ KAFKA'S GREAT allegorical novels have often been compared to *Pilgrim's Progress*. But, in fact, they differ from any allegories written before because they do not set up a system of symbols which can easily be recognized as corresponding to some system existing in the real world, nor do they offer any solution, any "moral", as Bunyan does. I believe the fact is that Kafka saw the world much as he describes it in his novels, just as a man who feels himself to be persecuted sees reality fitting into a system, which is really of a spiritual order, to persecute

him Although we might not agree that the victim of persecution mania was persecuted, we might easily find that his systematization of reality gave us an exceedingly convincing view of reality, a view which at moments penetrated beyond reality itself to another final reality, the persecutors themselves.

We do, indeed, find that Kafka gives us just such a view of reality as would the victim of persecution. However roundabout it may seem, his approach to reality is direct: he is not building up an allegory in order to illustrate a metaphysic, he is penetrating reality in order to discover a system of truth. How often when reading his fantastic accounts of human behaviour we find ourselves exclaiming not "how remotely that corresponds to something in life which we dimly see beyond it", but "how extraordinary, yet how true". For example, the disorderliness, the lack of dignity, the inappropriateness of the officials who are prosecuting K. in *The Trial* have the significance of monumental truth, because it is through these obstructions which are life itself, that K. sees the good life, which these very irrelevancies, in being irrelevant, yet imperfectly represent.

What distinguishes K. from the persecution maniac is that he is the least important figure in his own universe, whereas the neurotic is, of course, the centre of his universe, and persecution is the means which the world adopts to flatter his ego. In a sublime sense, K. is humble. This traveller whose case in *The Trial*, or whose task in *The Castle*, is of trifling importance, is a supreme outsider. He is not only ignorant of the way of life which every one else accepts, he is ignorant of life itself. His love-making is not sexual, it is an innocent attempt to conform, to reach the centre of life, a parallel to his spiritual journey. Just because he is an outsider he has the stranger's fresh view of life and the reality beyond life. That truth Kafka never attained: he only knew there was a truth. If he had lived, he might have written novels which started off from a goal, instead of these novels which never attain their goal.

*The Metamorphosis* is a strange and terrifying nightmare, the whole plot of which is contained in the first paragraph. "As Gregor Samsa awoke one morning from a troubled dream, he found himself changed in his bed to some monstrous kind of vermin." The story describes, simply and straightforwardly, Gregor's attempts to adapt himself to this change, the attitude to him of his family and his employer, until finally, neglected by them all, he dies. It contains no metaphysical purpose, it is an account, in Kafka's terms, of a given situation in contemporary life: the situation, say, of a bank clerk, on whom his whole family has depended, who wakes up one morning to discover that he is suffering from an incurable disease.

STEPHEN SPENDER.

KING WREN. The Youth of Henry IV. By HEINRICH MANN.

Translated by Eric Sutton. Secker and Warburg. 10s. 6d.

HISTORICAL NOVELS HAVE never attracted me and in the past I have only read them for profit. *King Wren*, however, has completely captivated me, as much as did Merjkovsky's *The Forerunner* when I was a child. It has achieved the purpose of making me eager to read up the period, to discover more, not only of Henry IV, but of everything that Heinrich Mann has written. In England too few know much more of Heinrich Mann than that he is the brother of Thomas.

*King Wren* is extraordinarily well done. I began reading it and resented interruption, which is a rare enough feeling to-day. As to its accuracy, I leave that to the historians. It is a brilliant picture of the sixteenth century; vivid, alive, and exciting.

Heinrich Mann could not have written this book so wisely without the experience of Hitler's Germany. He induces his reader to spring to comparisons with present-day politics. "For a people can only be united when thinking has been stopped." "What a mob especially detests is ordered thought." But nothing which even modern dictators devise can compare to the ghastly outrages and hideous murders at which Catherine de Medici was so skilled. Yet Heinrich Mann has succeeded, so brilliantly has he conceived her, in making even this queen a sympathetic character. As for Navarre, his wife and his many mistresses, they all spring to life and become real to the reader. There are six hundred and fourteen pages but scarcely a dull one throughout. The translation is excellent—my only quibble with Eric Sutton is his occasional use of the historic present, which I think spoils his rhythm—and the publishers' blurb is the first to underestimate an author's qualities.

GWENDA DAVID.

GENTLEMAN OVERBOARD. By HERBERT CLYDE LEWIS. Gollancz. 6s.

IF THE TROPICAL sunrise had not been quite so romantic—if the ship's steward had not upset grease in that particular place—if little Jimmy Benson had searched for his friend and challenged him to their daily game of deck quoits—if the routine of the fo'c'sle had proceeded in its customary manner . . . things would have been very different. But unfortunate coincidences dove-tailed. Henry Standish stepped back in a trance from his contemplation of the sunrise, slipped on a grease patch and fell headlong into the sea. The lookout men were engaged in a free fight on the fo'c'sle deck, little Jimmy Benson had been punished for being a naughty boy and was sulking in his cabin, and the S.S. *Arabella* plunged on at a slow but reliable speed of ten knots, blissfully unaware of the fact that one of her most distinguished guests was

floundering in mid-ocean, dodging porpoises, and frantically trying to inform the world of his unhappy plight in between gulps of salt water.

Mr. Lewis has an original and fascinating idea ; what's more, he has a devastating knack of putting it across, and arousing our curiosity and interest to such an extent that we race through the book, living through every minute of our waterlogged hero's misadventure, and wondering whether the *Arabella* will or won't turn round in time. . . .

All Standish's reactions, mental and physical, are described with the most vivid imagination. Almost too vivid ; for hours after we have finished the book, we go on thinking and worrying about the poor little man, completely forgetting the note on the title page : "All the characters in this book are entirely fictitious. . . ."

PERDITA PENARTH.

THREE COMRADES. By ERICH MARIA REMARQUE. Translated by A. W. Wheen. Hutchinson. 8s. 6d.

THERE HAS BEEN much unfavourable criticism of Remarque's work, much of it due to jealousy, some of it well founded. It is unjust to minimize his influence : although there were books that were better than *All Quiet*, he was the first to bring the horrors and stupidities of the last war to the consciousness of thousands of people whom no artistic or political specialist literature would have reached.

He is unable, however, to break away from his personal neurosis. Human endurance is limited. His initial struggle may have been more intense than with most. He can keep himself, we judge, on the level of sanity, by living and re-living his war experiences in his work, in order to prove, by looking up occasionally, that he is still alive. This novel is a repetition of his former books, only it is a civilian war with a sanatorium for battleground. It is also curiously out of date. The drinking, the what-is-the-use-of-anything, are (rather than politically preoccupied Berlin) Paris, 1920-5, when bewildered survivors from many nations met and quarrelled over café tables. Speed, then, was one of the solutions and Karl, the car, is one of the best characters in the story.

The book has power, it is easily read ; Remarque can give a real sense of swiftly changing landscape on a journey ; he knows his job as a writer. Yet something is lacking, the frustration goes too far. What it is we know, if we compare *Three Comrades* with Renn's *Death Without Battle*. Renn's book is infinitely more terrible, yet he leaves us with hope, where Remarque has only despair.

Perhaps in his next volume he will have caught up to his comrades, many of whom are facing war the second time, not ignorantly but with full consciousness of why they are there, in the trenches or along the barricades of Spain.

ERNEST HUDSON.



SWASTIKA NIGHT. By MURRAY CONSTANTINE. Gollancz. 7s. 6d.

BOOKS, PLAYS, FILMS of prediction share a common failure—it is impossible to imagine the future. The best that can be done is to exaggerate and distort the present. Murray Constantine's novel of the seventh century of the Hitlerian era, though not planned so much as a forecast as a commentary on Germany to-day, points the way to which Hitlerism, according to the author, is speeding.

The Nazi Empire in this book has spread over half the earth, absorbing Europe and Africa, while the other half of the world is ruled by the Japanese Empire. Hitler has become the Son of God, the Thunderer, exploded, not born, from the head of his divine parent. Women have degenerated into a kind of ape, hideous with shaved heads, living apart from the men except for purposes of procreation. (The author does not explain how a sexual interest in these monsters is available.) The Empire is feudalistic, ruled by the Knights who hold power of Church and State. Art has vanished, music alone remains. History pre-Hitler has been destroyed and only a few tentative legends are whispered. Truth, however, will out. An Englishman gets it. At the same time, the overthrow of the Empire is being accomplished by natural means. Women are ceasing to bear females and the population starts to fail. War has ceased to be possible as the rival Empires are too equally matched to risk a conflict. Without war, the Hitlerian philosophy becomes meaningless. What can happen but dissolution?

As a flight of fancy, the book is readable and sincere; but it is not deeply thoughtful nor politically valid. It is a pity that a writer, whose previous books have revealed a profound observer of human behaviour, should dissipate considerable strength of feeling in a spendthrift and somewhat unconvincing tirade of a quite improbable sub-Wellsian "shape of things to come". The book, repeating the accident of the two stools, is neither fantasy nor realism. Politics are for newspapers or history; to-morrow comes always the unforeseen.

KENNETH MACPHERSON.

A BRIDGE TO DIVIDE THEM. By GORONWY REES. Faber and Faber. 7s. 6d.

CWMARDY. By LEWIS JONES. Wishart. 7s. 6d.

BEING NOT FICTION but books, these two novels differ from most English novels, even or especially from those made to be English proletarian novels (there are so few English writers whose proletarian novels do not seem "made"). These two are not attempts to play a tune not native to the author nor are they distant echoes from a world that does not know it is dead. They come out into to-day's world and in the middle of it, of all we are trying to do, they ring the bell.



This fact admired, let it be admitted that Rees's new book is over-literary. That often happens with second books and of anyone who can write as he gives sign to do, one only says it in view of the third, to come. Rees takes two families—a stoker and his wife, and a “public-spirited and masterful citizen”, Harcourt, and his daughter. Harcourt's life-work is to span the estuary between two seaside towns with a bridge, not so much because it will bring prosperity to them as power to him. For the fulfilment of this aim, no cost is too high. One of the costs is neglect of his slum property and Johnny, the stoker, who is having an affair with Harcourt's niggling daughter, returns one day to find that his pregnant wife has been killed by a beam, about which he had been to see Harcourt. Johnny and Annie, his wife, are grand characters. The early part of the book, set in a mining village, in which Johnny finds himself, has an unconcerned athletic power. But come we to Harcourt and it is from creation to construction that we have passed. There is a stilted emphasis laid on externals which leads one to think of Galsworthy. One wonders if this book is to be a Welsh *Skin Game*. It is not, but that one should think of it is the sign that Rees hasn't succeeded in what he set out to do, even granted that much of that was symbolical. He has instead half-done something which should later be below his attempting.

The reverse of literary is *Cwmardy*. For twenty years, Lewis Jones worked in the mines. He has led strikes, hunger marches, and been imprisoned for political activity. Now, he is a City Councillor and unemployed. He has, in his own words, “set out to ‘novelise’ a phase of working-class history.” The phase is thirty years up to 1921. It is told through the development of the young Len, under the influence of his father, Big Jim, a fine rough sterling giant-miner of the old school, and Ezra, a miner's leader of the new. There is also Len's mother, Shane, the kind of woman immortalised in the film *Mother*. “Your heart do be of gold, though your words, they sometimes sound like brass” as her family says to her—and I would have you know that one measure of this book's size is that the characters do talk like that, as one knows they do in life, without seeming only for a book. *Cwmardy* “was written during odd moments stolen from mass meetings, demonstrations, marches, and other activities”. And “book or no book, the mass struggle must go on, and all of us had to play our part. The jumpiness of certain portions of the book is evidence of this”.

Jones does not deceive himself. The book is jumpy. At times, action is telescoped, at others important events are sketched in but not worked over. Parts read like a scenario. Nevertheless, *Cwmardy* is a book with body to it. External issues and personal problems are manfully blended. The people are of the kind that are an inspiration to more literature than they have ever heard of. They live not only because they are brilliantly drawn, but because in their lives, limited as they may

be, they have something to live for. This book is a relief to those to whom novels are bugaboo stories of a derelict upper bourgeoisie, and to the bourgeois themselves it should teach, without any bitterness, not only something of the working-class movement, but of the people who, making it possible, are in turn produced by it and already make most others seem irrelevant.

EDWARD FARRER.

STAR MAKER. By OLAF STAPLEDON. Methuen. 8s. 6d.

EIGHT YEARS AGO J. D. Bernal contributed an essay to the *To-day and To-morrow* series called *The World, the Flesh, and the Devil*. It contained a series of brilliant speculations on the subject of man's future conquest of the universe, and predictions as to his future increasingly conscious self-determination of his own development. Mr. Olaf Stapledon has acknowledged the debt he owes to Dr. Bernal in the preface to his new book. In its own way his own approach and vision is no less stupendous. To the scientist's necessarily cold rational prognostication he has infused the warm breath of humanity, and has made the dwellers on his possible worlds live and not merely exist.

In the telling of this "cosmological fantasy" he has made use of an artifice—the dematerialisation of a mind and its projection into the cosmos—which allows this mind not only to visit in turn the many kinds of inhabited world, but also to enter the consciousness of selected inhabitants of each world. In time other minds decide to join him in his voyage through the universe and together they learn to form an immortal group-consciousness which is capable of travelling through space and through time from the first formation and dissemination of the spiral nebulae, to the final cooling and degeneration, the final inglorious victory of the second law of thermodynamics, "not with a bang but a whimper."

The scope of this book is so tremendous that any attempt to describe its contents in brief is doomed to failure. As the exploration becomes more and more distant and fantastic the reader's understanding is led along increasingly difficult paths of imagination; and yet the whole time the thing remains enthralling. Mr. Stapledon is educating his audience in a thrilling, speculative new game of universal geography. Even the final, mystical introduction of a supreme "Star Maker", the first-cause of every cosmos, although it jars, leaves us still in the clouds. The author makes a last attempt to bring us back to earth, and fails.

JOHN MADGE.

## SHORT STORIES

NO GREEN PASTURES. By JEAN BARCLAY LOW. Gollancz. 7s. 6d. THESE SHORT STORIES are above the average in originality and in style. They suffer badly from the persistent recurrence in each of a determined and angry pessimism. It is as though the author had said "there shall be *no* green pastures, not a blade of grass". She refuses to admit that human beings, whether in a central European village or anywhere else, do for the most part have a share of happiness, even of ecstasy, mingled with the misery, greed, violence, ignorance, and loss which, in this book, are alone allowed to constitute their lives. Taken singly, the stories could be read without this impression intruding, but as a collection the effect is first dreary and then funny. The book is also too imitative for a writer of so much ability. Her next will be worth reading for here is poetic sensibility, inventive situation, and an understanding of the minds of those who live and die by the earth. What there is not is a sense of proportion or detachment, one dare not say humour.

PETRIE TOWNSHEND.

PATH AND PAVEMENT. Edited by JOHN ROWLAND. Eric Grant. 7s. 6d.

ONLY TWO OR three of these "twenty new tales of Britain by eminent authors" make any attempt to marshal the bewildering complexities of life into a significant and æsthetic pattern; the rest are merely excursions into the supernatural and macabre, quite adequate, in their various ways, for providing diversion on a railway journey, but cumbersomely built up out of stock characters and stock situations. Llewelyn Powys's *The Head of a Man*, Hugh Macdiarmid's dialect story *The Moon Through Glass*, and T. F. Powys's *Rosie Plum* are the only stories of any real value in the book, and they are distinguished—the two former especially—for their direct and simple sincerity. Other stories, very readable and somewhat better than the rest, are those by John Lindsay, Rhys Davies, Richard Preston, and Hamish Maclaren.

But this is an odd sort of book. It has a rather apologetic pre-war air about it, and this is further emphasized by Mr. Rowland's curious introduction in which he throws out mysterious hints concerning "regionalism", "a synthesis", and "a message". Whatever else these stories may be, they are definitely not regional in any way at all; neither do they form "a synthesis of regional life", and neither is any "coherent theory" to be discerned. It is a pity that Mr. Rowland (who is apparently the author of, among other things, *Bloodshed in Bayswater* and *Death on Dartmoor*) should have become so desperate about finding a plan for his book. It would have been much more sensible had he left it for what it is—a miscellaneous (a very miscellaneous) collection of short stories, good, bad, and mostly indifferent.

CLIFFORD DYMENT.

## ARCHITECTURE

WREN. By GEOFFREY WEBB. Duckworth. 2s.

THE MODERN LINE of thought followed by Christopher Wren in the solving of his architectural problems has a peculiar attraction to the present generation, who, among wars and rumours of wars, find little time for contemplation of men or works of past ages which lack sinew and timelessness.

Geoffrey Webb's monograph is a pithy summary of the historical facts and mental development of "a youth of a prodigious inventive witt" who became a man of wide interests; interests laced and braced by life-long scientific experiment and adventure—a fine product of the truly liberal education possible in England to those of gentle birth before the parasitical blight of the public-school-spirit sapped the vitality, and so confined the goal, of the adolescent and the young adult. The division of Wren's work in this book into four periods is itself a succinct comment on the growth from the man's interest in a single three-dimensional design to a building as part of a group as part of an assembly of groups.

Wren's architectural career began at the age of thirty-four, and as more and more jobs materialized, his work improved from competent immaturity to a resplendent fulfilment. Mr. Webb has ably compressed all the vital facts of the course of Wren's experiments and varying success of problem solutions from his early Office of Works period, followed by the large scale non-ecclesiastical buildings, his Royal Surveyor's work in the erection of the city churches, to his larger schemes of St. Paul's, Hampton Court, and, finally, Greenwich.

Detailed chapter headings, a clearly dated chronology of events, with a comprehensive bibliography covering the various aspects of Wren's versatile life, make this a valuable handbook with a direct appeal to architects. Being scholarly, imaginatively detached, and extremely readable in one, it is also an excellent guide to the inquiring layman. Both will find Wren a man they can understand; a man who thought of his buildings as problems in space-spanning, and, additionally in his last period, of group composition. A designer who would have generated the possibilities of twentieth-century materials into the apparently inevitable monuments of æsthetic and scientific delight which result from the impact of an imaginative mind on a medium of which it is a scientific master.

JOANNA MACFADYEN.

BRITAIN AND THE BEAST. Edited by CLOUGH WILLIAMS-ELLIS.  
Dent. 10s. 6d.

THIS BEAST is no lion lying down with any lamb. It is greedily busy translating the British landscape into sinister "cash values", with

"profit" as its slogan, and the fat bank account as its holy grail. And where is quality and delight?

Britain is being vulgarized, prostituted. Here is a fine bouquet of vital facts, wrapped in conclusions, with here and there a sprig of active policy. The outline of destructive economics, among the many facets presented by twenty-six writers, has something of this shape: the British, by the Enclosure Acts of the eighteenth century, were deprived of their universal ownership of unhedged communal land-wealth. Gradually, out of Power-by-Money of a minority, there grew Exploitation. This in its natural course begat Fear and Holding-What-You-Have. These elements are difficult to control and expensive to maintain. Taxes, which can only be paid by Those-Who-Have, mounted higher and higher. Finally, the Few-Who-Have, who must pay their privilege-taxes in money, sold land for cash and continue to sell *irresponsibly* this birthright of the nation, THE LAND, to the children of Commerce—the malformed heirs of the Dispossessed who, never having known pride in wide horizons and green hills for their intrinsic qualities, are also irresponsible. These have been born and bred in the unnatural shadow of fevered finance and industrialism, divorced too long from the natural seasons and their quiet pace. The vicious circle is bitterly complete. There will soon be little of worth in Britain for Possessors or Dispossessed. An island bristling with costly munitions protecting a deadly rash of lunacies perpetrated and suffered by some forty-eight million lunatics.

Staring from every page of these excellently objective facts and photographs, whether one finds it palatable or not, is the need for socialization—the return of the land to responsible guidance in trust for the whole nation—however much the form may be modified by the British. But socialization must plan and maintain a healthy balance between town and countryside, or national life becomes deformed. And if agriculture does not "pay" (slogan)? But A. G. Street, a farmer, says: "The dairy industry alone employs more people than all our shipbuilding and all our electrical engineering added together; and, by comparison with the whole of our farming industry, our shipbuilding is a smallish business. . . . each year our countryfolk produce, and sell off their land for money, goods equal to more than half the total value of our export trade." If under our present economic system this spells b-a-n-k-r-u-p-t-c-y only a diseased mind can seriously say that complete reorganization does not suggest itself. Either Britain can be a whole nation with a living countryside of rich landscapes having controlled cities of seemly architecture as distributing and intellectual centres; or inevitably it will, with gathering speed, breed only cancerous cities of Britons prostituting a dying countryside in a chain of sterile week-ends.

JOANNA MACFADYEN.

## FILM

MONEY FOR FILM STORIES. By NORMAN LEE. Pitman. 7s. 6d.

THE PUBLIC HAS become so accustomed to seeing the film director caricatured that it is growing to believe, with its love of being what it thinks is "astute", that the film director must really be a "brainy guy". The virtue of *Money For Film Stories*, the work of an English film director, is that it will serve to remind the public that a million cartoonists cannot be wrong. Mr. Lee writes, "I am afraid films are very conventional . . . Do not jar your audience too sharply or too often." I hardly believe that a novice, imitating Mr. Lee's examples of plot and humour, will jar any audience with originality. It is harder to believe that there will be any audience at all. (Those people who sit through the performance of British quickies simply "aren't true".)

The truth is that the greater part of being one kind of a film director consists of the showman's ability not to be ashamed. Mr. Lee's book appears to show that the same ability may get an unrepentant typist a hundred pounds or so from a British Film Company. There have, of course, been parallels in the literary world: after all, Mr. H. G. Wells did win world fame through presenting *Boy's Own Paper* material without a blush.

OSWELL BLAKESTON.

THE ROMANCE OF THE MOVIES. By LESLIE WOOD. Illustrated. Heinemann. 15s.

SEZ WE, A bit late in the day for a title like that. The tale of the movies is simply the old, old story of thwarted courage, minimized achievement and maximum cash-profit, which has attended most of man's efforts, whether they be mining or music. Neither comedy nor tragedy, such a tale naturally fails to be romance.

Yet the author is right. Employing, and believing in, such a title, he embodies the spirit of movies,—that strange half-way-housed spirit, drawing much from the past, promising, it still seems, something for the future, and having, it seems even more, so little to do with the present, let Theodora go wild as she will. "History" is too heavy a mantle for such a jade. Denude her in tights, deck her in sequins sewn on to gauze, and she's at home—light on the eye, as they say, and on the brain and almost everything but the conscience. To which, as a chronicler should, this author pays little heed. We may think it would be a change to have a manual of the movies which gave something of working conditions, which glorified cameramen and cutters at least as much as the stars they themselves glorify, and which let us know how much directors' ambitions were hampered by said stars, cameramen, and cutters, not to mention the rest. But when a man begins a book, in 1937, with "a veritable

whirlpool of all that is best and worst in human nature has gone to the making of the talkie of to-day", we must recognize, with reverence, the right "barker" accent. Here is the showmanship, composed of gusto and glitter, which is always to be found whenever a movie-house shoves out its light-studded marquee over drab or dry pavements.

There have been, Goldwyn knows, previous film-histories in plenty. This is the first in which manner is in tune with the matter of early movies. For that reason, the book is better in the beginning. The familiar facts are there—Friese-Greene and the policemen, Paul and the Greeks, the disappearance of Le Prince and the rest. There is also much which I do not remember to have seen before; the first cinema proper was in Fife Road, Kingston-on-Thames; the first news-reel theatre in Bishopsgate, 1896; Theda Bara, the vamp, won her trade-mark through appearing in a film of a poem by Rudyard Kipling; Trotsky was alleged to have been an extra in a Norma Talmadge vehicle. Other facts I do not find. As may be gathered from the author's choice of *Ben Hur* for his cover, there is little record of serious European achievement. Further, he is not free from inaccuracy. *Mary Pickford to-day* scarcely fits *Coquette* (1929) and if he wishes to show a scene "as the stage-hand sees it" and then "as the audience sees it", why use two stills of different scenes? I would, however, forgive these for a delightful misprint (on p. 276), "*Kitty*, from a novel by Warwick Weeping (*sic*).” But I find it hard to excuse a publisher of long-standing and reputation for issuing this book, not only without an index, but without list of chapters or even headings. More readers than one may be caused to remark *A fine romance this is* if they wish data on, say, Alma Taylor, Cherry Kearton's air-pictures or Walton-on-Thames, in a hurry. And I am still wondering how a document of the *future* of films can be, as the cover assures me this volume is, "thoroughly well documented and *illustrated*." The italics are mine.

R. H.

FOOTNOTES TO THE FILM. Edited by CHARLES DAVY. Lovat Dickson. 18s.

I UNDERSTAND THAT this book is illustrated. As the publishers, however, saw fit to send me only a proof copy, containing no stills, I can comment neither on their selection nor reproduction, and am unable to say whether these justify the high price. For the rest, the text consists of essays by eighteen contributors, varying from what you might call "all the usuals" to such surprises as Paul Nash (pleasant) and Robert Donat (personal). The editor has rightly remembered that at the centre of cinema is "the practical work of film-making in the studio". In theory, we thus get away from the critics and hear something from those concerned in the construction of films. In practice, however, we don't



get very much. The experiences of a news-reel man would have been worth reading, the makers of scientific films might have had a word, and sound is not properly dealt with. Hitchcock, Donat, and Basil Wright do not really manage to cover "How a Film is Made". Hitchcock is good as far as he goes, but one man cannot cover so diverse a thing as direction; I would have liked one or two others, of different schools. Donat is brilliantly hard-hitting. But again, it would have been interesting to have been able to contrast his opinions with those of an extra or a star of silent days. The best essays are those by Cavalcanti, on comedies and cartoons, Paul Nash, on colour, and Maurice Jaubert on music. Alastair Cooke is himself, and also apt, in writing on critics, and Sidney Bernstein, as director of the Granada chain, is worth reading on public taste and box-office generally.

R. H.

THE AMERICAN FILM. By ERIC H. RIDEOUT. Mitre Press. 15s.  
HOLLYWOOD THROUGH THE BACK DOOR. By E. NILS  
HOLSTIUS. Bles. 10s. 6d.

TAKE THE BUSINESS of cats! Stars walk through houses in which neither whiskers nor tail-tips are ever glimpsed. The village street (made in the studio) is empty of cat-life. No still in Mr. Rideout's book contains a cat. Yes, a cat or two has been seen on the American screen; but—and here is the point—only when it is a trick cat which will bring the imprisoned lover a message from his mistress. That is why we call American films "superficial", because everything and everyone in them is trick. "Slick," the word Hollywood loves, really means "trick". Everyone and everything is forced on to one plane (the trick plane) so that there are no overtones or undertones. For the student of cinema, *The American Film* is a useful lesson provided it is opened with a corrective near at hand, such as Mr. Robert Herring's essay on the film in entertainment which is to be found in *Cinema Survey*.

I would rather have honest gossip about the stars than Mr. Rideout's pedestrian letterpress. But Mr. Holstius need not have gone all the way to Hollywood to find out that Aimée Macpherson has put the Lord's name in neon lighting. At this time of day, a chapter devoted to a strip teasing show could only be excused if it had described the new craze of male strip teasing. But all Mr. Holstius's gossip is dangerously near to old news. A great deal of the book is taken up with the author's crossness at not being given a job as a scenario writer. He offered to work for nothing, and nobody was interested. How sad. But for whom?

OSWELL BLAKESTON.



## JAZZ

SWING THAT MUSIC. By LOUIS ARMSTRONG. Longmans.  
7s. 6d.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF one of the main personalities in jazz proves that he and swing grew up together. It seems that swing is a loving word given to jazz for the best that there is in it. The book defines this best quite well.

The writing is in easy style: "The next day came up bright and nice, and the river quiet. . . ." "On July the 4th I was twenty years old, and the boys gave me a little party in the city. It's nice having a birthday on a holiday, if it isn't Christmas. . . ."

One or two bits of sentimental mention of people who influenced his early life in the Waifs' Home for Boys, and facetiousness with the word "swing", are a bit off. But the sincerity of his jazz seeped mind soon gets the book going. ". . . let me present Mr. 'Fate' Marable, at the piano, Mr. David Jones on the melophone, and Mr. Louis Armstrong on the trumpet." "Don't think I don't." ". . . dogged out and not sorry. . . ." "Sounds good, looks good." "We had a real good time together and I wonder if she remembers me now. We sure fried some fish. . . ."

It seems to me, be its external creative stimulus springtime, reefers, booze, or early morning glow, jazz can take its place, if it's got swing, alongside any of the non-utilitarian mind gems. In particular, for races mob-speeded like us, it might be the best popular art form we've got. On the tack too that pleasure and entertainment forms are mind flips, let's hope for work, that all social and art communists, Prouns, anarchists, and blimps, won't forget to give us a jazz song as well as an anthem.

If you don't like jazz don't or do read the book. If you do there's Louis and also technical treatments of swing by other name-known exponents.

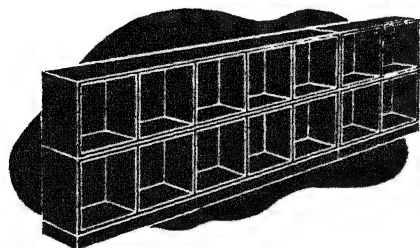
LEN LYE.

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RADIO IS CHANGING US. By D. CLEGHORN THOMSON. Watts.  
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CERTAINLY IT IS! radio is rapidly changing us into a nation of robots. The sociologist has only to turn to Cornish peasants. Not so long ago they led a full mental life, gave names to rocks, tales to wells, and in the public houses told lovely stories of never-never adventures. Now the wireless has forced on them standard notions. The things

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which went on inside their heads have no time to be heard : at any hour of the day or conventional night some station is blaring. To save what is left of culture there ought to be long hours when nothing is broadcast, by international law, from any station. Philanthropic societies should finance large posters : "Listen In To Silence." Everywhere books should be distributed in praise of silence : how silence may make a man so sensitive that he can read tiny cut-out letters arranged on the back of his neck, etc.

The point is touched on by Mr. Thomson (page 132), but, for the most part, he takes the popular view that wireless can become the centre of all that is most vital in the nation's cultural and creative life. Perhaps it might—after it has completed the processes of reducing the populace to idiots. Instead of stressing the "creative" side of the microphone as instrument (as Mr. Thomson, inspired by the man who turned the G.P.O. films into uniform sales product, would like to do), if the officials gave a realist emphasis on the machine as machine they might yet save our souls. Starting with the non-romantic basis of the mike as reproductive machine, we might reach special stations for special work with sets which could only receive those stations. Instead of buying a pianola, the listener could get a set which only received piano music ; while news machines could be used exclusively in tube-trains during rush hours. Such specialization would not swamp the pattern of life, would not deprive things of their *mana* by mixing everything together. It would just make certain things easier, like reading in a crowded train. Hell help us all if ever the microphone is used in the full "creative" way (as Grierson uses old-fashioned Russian cutting) and jumps about all over the world in a single minute. The separateness, the life and magic of everything will then vanish for ever from men's minds.

OSWELL BLAKESTON.

## TRAVEL

THE CACTUS EATERS. By JULIAN A. WESTON. Witherby. 10s. 6d.  
BATTLEFIELD OF THE GODS. By PÁL KELEMEN. Allen and  
Unwin. 10s. 6d.

THERE ARE IN the main two motives in these days for professional travellers : to visit a country either because it has not been visited before, or because the traveller knows there is a culture there worth studying. The first motive is rarer than the second, in that there are so few tracts of country that have not been visited by someone already. However, Mr. Weston and a companion lit upon one such tract, inland of the Venezuelan peninsula, and cheerfully determined to explore it, in spite of the monotony of the desert landscape and the improbability of making any very exciting discoveries. Their account of the Goajira

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Indians is a cheerful, haphazard picture of quite a pleasant undeveloped community, living in a situation that gives no stimulus to development, and exhibiting the common social characteristics of such elementary communal organizations, where the women do all the work and bear all the burdens of life, while the men, who hold but do not manage all the property rights, divide their time between drunkenness and play. It is interesting to find examples of the same tendency which is prevalent among similar but more developed societies, such as the Balinese, of the men to dress in women's clothes and take the girl's part in the Chichamaya dance. But apart from this, and a sensible explanation of the economic basis of the system of matrilineal descent, there is nothing of outstanding anthropological interest in the *Cactus Eaters*. It is a traveller's book, quite simply, and a pleasantly chatty one at that.

Mr. Kelemen's book is of the other kind. He goes to Mexico as an art historian, concerned entirely with the enduring records of that country's past. This is an excellent introduction to Maya art, and, it is to be hoped, a study for a full work by Mr. Kelemen on Mexican Art. His most interesting essays are those on the origins of our information about pre-Conquest civilization, in particular that on Cortes being a masterpiece of compressed study. This book is really a collection of the notes and studies of a scholar, and a scholar with a finely balanced appreciation of the living value of the art he is studying. With its splendid assortment of photographs, it is very highly to be recommended as an introduction which links an art almost unequalled for massive grandeur and delicacy of line, with its almost deleted social and historical condition.

RANDALL SWINGLER.

THE BALKANS BY BICYCLE. By W. PAPEL HAMSHER. Witherby. 8s. 6d.

It is a more difficult feat than it sounds to cycle across the Balkans, not only on account of the difficulties of language—Greek, Turkish, and Serbian—but because of the real danger of disease. There are mosquitoes and Mr. Hamsher's tour ended in hospital with acute malaria. The usual adventures of not lack of money, so much as lack of the right coin for the particular district, flies, bad food, magnificent scenery and encounters with peasants who spoke isolated English words remembered from the camp at Salonika, are all here for background. We never seem to learn, however, the exact purpose of the trip. Mr. Hamsher took his experiences too seriously to have been one of the students he often met on the road, but though he hints at religious experiences and a large portion of the volume is devoted to a description of Mount Athos, the immediate impression becomes more important than his search.

LAMBERT STONE.

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Here you may read what such writers as **Julien Benda, Ralph Bates, Jef Last, Pablo Neruda** and **Jose Bergamin** actually said. . . . The September issue is by way of being a Spanish number and includes also Poems of the Spanish War by **Alberti, Luque** and **Machado**. . . . But if you want the whole Congress Report you will require also the August issue—for the first part. This contains other excellent things—Short Stories by **James Hanley, Leslie Halward, M. R. Anand**, and **Pablo Neruda's** fine poem, "Almeria". . . . For anyone whose eye it has never met, we might add that "Left Review", the literary and cultural monthly of the Left, is a **64 page illustrated magazine, containing 25,000 words at the price of 6d.** . . .

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ICY HELL. By WILLIAM E. HUDSON. Constable. 10s.

ONE OF THE difficulties of travel books is that men who have the strength "to go on" usually have not a high command of literary subtleties. Mr. Hudson pulled out half a dozen of his toe-nails in half an hour, and he writes with a cheerfulness which the most agonizing endurance cannot modify. Newscameraman, he shipped himself on a schooner bound for the far North. A little he-man vacation, and perhaps some nice pictures won through keeping in touch with the outside world! Well, Mr. Hudson ended up in an ice desert which had only been visited by ten other travellers. He was amazingly lucky in the land where the weak die and the strong survive—if they are lucky. True, he contended with every rigour of the North, but nothing monstrous overtook him. Thus the incident is principally snapshot: seeing an Eskimo mother bath her baby in the manner of the she-cat, watching the abandoned Nome railway (the "pupmobile") which an energetic sourdough still runs on his own by means of a push-car hooked to a dozen dogs. . . . But, yes, sir, monstrous things still can happen in that frozen land. Mr. Hudson was told of seal-skin pirates and their cruel raids on Copper Islanders, and of dead whales being pushed into shallow water by a herd of enormous polar bears.

The photographic illustrations bring home one of the author's shrewder comments—why is it that the natives live in such dirt and filth in a country which itself is so terrifyingly clean?

OSWELL BLAKESTON.

FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE. By PAUL PRY. Routledge. 3s. 6d.

IN INFORMAL DIALOGUE, an old clubman and a younger discuss a matter which affects most male members sooner or later. The point of the discourse is the lateness which is expected of them. Prompted as much by civilisation as kindness, the two compare notes on drink's dictatorship. They lack the wit, as they lack the wine, of Capri, but they fulfil a longfelt want or, not to be too nice, relieve a pressing need. There are moments when the map is incomplete—what map isn't, and what would be the use of necessity if it didn't put one to the bother of an invention? Nevertheless, grateful as I am for their end-papers, I could still show them one or two places. And that without needing to. That may be because I don't drink lager, and I feel that the authors weaken their case by suggesting that their comfort is conditioned by Carlsberg. Believe me, once you get over to Battersea, it's a long way between Watneys. And why? Look at this map!

A. WILLS.

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## REVIEWS OF BOOKS

### SELECTED BOOKS

DIET AND HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE. By DR. I. HARRIS. The Hogarth Press. 10s. 6d.

THE TITLE DOES not cover the scope of this book. It is really a treatise on God, and the world and blood pressure. Dr. Harris, a distinguished physician, has carried out an investigation at the Liverpool Heart Hospital, serving no lesser purpose than to solve the problem of premature ageing with special reference to high blood pressure, the scientific record of which has been published as a monograph by the Oxford University Press. In the course of his research Dr. Harris has found that one of the chief causes of premature ageing is over-indulgence in food, and he accuses especially one factor of food, protein, of bringing about the conditions promoting the rise of blood pressure with the consequent irreparable damage to kidneys, heart, and blood vessels. In a series of experiments he has worked out the average minimum of protein necessary to replace the constant wear and tear of the body, and urgently recommends that neither more nor less should be taken by persons over thirty-five years of age. He has further worked out a diet régime based on this protein standard, and the book contains a great number of elaborate diet sheets and recipes for different tastes and requirements.

Dr. Harris's book has not been written for medical experts, nor for patients already suffering from high blood pressure, but is meant for the average healthy adult who wants to keep his health and energy, avoiding the mistakes which lead to premature death. So it is based on the sound principle that "to prevent is better than to cure". Though the chief part of the book is devoted to the problem of food which he denotes to be "the bottom of world tragedy", it deals with almost all the other aspects of a healthy and normal life, such as physical and mental strain, exercise, influence of occupations, conditions in towns and dwellings, and so forth. It is because of these chapters, and because fundamental physiological facts are explained in a very clear and simple manner, that this book will be interesting also for those persons who do not expect to die from high blood pressure, for after all—according to American statistics—it is the cause of fifteen per cent. of deaths in persons over fifty.

TRUDE WEISS.

THE NILE IN EGYPT. By EMIL LUDWIG. Translated by Mary H. Lindsay. Allen and Unwin. 16s.

THIS IS THE second volume of Dr. Ludwig's "biography" of the River Nile. As he says in his preface the first volume is three parts Nature and one part history, while of the second only half is given to Nature. The

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second volume is far the more readable of the two. In the first Dr. Ludwig was obliged, owing to the fact that his hero is wandering for the most part through uninhabited tracts, to devote large spaces to word-pictures of scenery which, though skilfully and competently done, give to a great extent the effect of padding. In this volume the banks of the River become alive with humanity and with the stuff of history, Dr. Ludwig evidently feels more in his element and the story becomes vivid and spirited.

It is no disparagement of the work to say that it is of the nature of a guide book. Dr. Ludwig leads us from the great gates of the Nile at Assuan down to the Delta and the Mediterranean, and introduces us to all the dynasties, potentates and powers that have ruled in that great valley. But his wide and accurate knowledge, wide powers of observation, and sane and human judgment of men and things make him a guide of no ordinary quality.

We meet Pharaohs, Ptolemies, Cæsars, Greeks, and Byzantines, the bishops, monks, scholars, and hermits of the early Church, Caliphs, Mamelukes, Napoleon reaching out to the East and foiled by English sea-power, the Turkish viceroys, the makers of the Suez Canal, foreign bondholders squabbling over Egyptian revenues, finally the English rulers settling down in the land, and giving scope for the new awakening of a political sense among a people who for centuries had known only how to suffer and obey.

Apart from the pictorial side of the subject, there is a brisk and intelligent description of the administrative, economic, and commercial problems of Egypt, even down to a dramatic description of the cotton exchange in Alexandria.

It is remarkable that in so rapid a survey of so many centuries of history, the author has covered so much ground without ever seeming superficial. Some of his judgments no doubt would be corrected by closer study, but in the main he has missed very little, and there are few aspects of Egyptian life and history that are not illuminated by this sensible and impartial commentary.

A. B. BUTTS HOWELL.

POEMS. By REX WARNER. Boriswood. 5s.

DELIGHT IN THE body, and all sensuousnesses, are probably preliminary stages to objectification of this extreme unrationalised individualism. Rex Warner is a sensuous poet, an epicure of contact and motion. He likes water because it has the qualities of water, not on account of its potential similes—and for the bourgeois idealistic revolution is often the reaction to the heady, irrationally received stimuli of the country, excitement (tragedy) of its sharp definitions and the logicity of its separate movements both creating and involved in the organic

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whole; a piece of agonising dialectical beauty to anyone conscious of the primitive human social disorganism. The dialectic rightness and the stimulating vividness of nature are interaffective qualities, subjectively separable, the dialectic logic creative of beauty. Rex Warner has a completely assured knowledge of this. It is not "sentimentalism" but the intuition of something not intellectually understood and therefore emoted upon, emotion valid and general. He mimes the sinuous precision and muscular elegance of nature in his sensitive rhythms. His images are cessations for admiration in an effortless continuity.

There are directly revolutionary poems as well, a trifle "decent" (wildly affable to whatever proletarians may indomitably propose), certainly of Day Lewis type, with whom he has affinities, but freer running—promising a more optimistic and practical revolutionism than Lewis's.

PHILIP O'CONNOR.

NEW WRITING. Edited by JOHN LEHMANN. Lawrence and Wishart. 6s.

"REVOLUTIONARY REALISM" DECIDES to leave drama in the hands of reality, and to reproduce as literature by objectivity, in direct contradiction to the transcendentalists. Drama of fact is the individual before hardly controllable circumstances; the lyricism of it is the feeling of its controllability he has, as one in a purposeful mass. Comradeship is the name of this lyricism, this delighted extraversion of morally inadequate impulses to revolution. Understanding this you will have the necessary subjectivism to appreciate the sometimes fussy exactitude of representationalism which most of the stories employ. The cohering understanding is your self-projection as de-individualising proletarian or bourgeois.

By proletarian writers the method is most effectively employed. In the beauty of cold mechanical structures, in the humanly rich hell of the coal mines, where emotion is easily found by the men who have contact with them, as components of circumstances men move with still their agitating blitheness of soul and hope in eye beneath the means he decides to employ to save that blitheness—a sort of singing, shy, unemployed, the quick of him and what is a communal quality in him, the real level and poetical cause of his comradeship in revolution. You notice the coal-pit and the glistening steel in their definite and emotional ways directing him; he is in awe of them, and grateful to them, for what they do. They have battered a stamina of resistance in him.

Less successful is the flabbergasted hen-soul of the bourgeois before "fascinating" phenomena, achieving psychic convulsions over the

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blue rims of quite innocent teacups. This sort of fussy literature continues fatuously to show skinny shanks under a skirt that will rot off before it is discarded. It is too directly symptomatic to deserve the name of literature; read John Lehmann's story. In this kind of thing bourgeois ideology is the completely unobjectified, undiscarded but staticised reaction-source, it shows its ninny wits by reacting in the stimulus's denuded form—denuded of sociological significance.

There is a fresh and long-sounding poem by Alberti, very fine, and a soulful one by Mr. Auden, and some very good translation from other Spanish poems. My general impression is that in this class of literature the proletarian writer knocks the bourgeois completely out; it is no use hiding one's head in the sand, receiving phenomenal kicks on the buttocks, and gurgling about the mysterious fascinating motions of reality, etc., because phenomena "isolated" are as subjectively conceptual as gassified or winged phenomena. The same is done to emotions, and to symbols of emotions and manners, etc.

PHILIP O'CONNOR.

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## NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

ANDRÉ GIDE was one of the many distinguished writers who helped our first number. He then gave us the speech he had delivered at the International Congress of Writers in Paris. We are now happy to print the *Preface* he has written to Thomas Mann's Letter in reply to the Dean of Bonn University, published as a pamphlet.

THOMAS MANN'S latest contribution is the foreword he has written to a new world magazine entitled *Mass und Wert* (*Measure and Value*), now published from Switzerland.

YAO HSIN-NUNG is on the editorial board of the Chinese review, *T'ien Hsia*. In October he arrived in England from the U.S.S.R. as delegate of the Sun Yat-Sen Institute for the Advancement of Culture and Education, the All-China League of Cultural Groups for National Salvation, the Sino-Soviet Cultural Association, etc. He is writing for the Unity Theatre a play called *Yellow Man's Burden*, composing it first in Chinese and then in English, which he speaks and writes fluently.

WILLIAM EMPSON held the chair of English at Bunrika Daijaku, Tokyo—but that was four years ago, and last August he left England to fill the post of Professor of English literature in the University of Peking. When he arrived, the Japanese were in occupation and the Peking University had moved up the Yangtze-kiang to Chang-sha. He himself got there by way of Hong Kong and whilst waiting for the students to be able to turn up, he was—when last heard from—climbing the mountains of Yunnan. He published a volume of verse, *Poems*, in 1935, is the author of two books of criticism, *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (1930) and *Some Versions of Pastoral* (1935), and first contributed to us in Number 4 (Summer, 1936).

WATSON KIRKCONNELL has published volumes of translations from Polish and Hungarian. He also translates Icelandic and in our Winter Number, 1936, he contributed an article on contemporary Icelandic poets. Born in Canada in 1895, he is Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada; Fellow of the Royal Historical Society; Knight (Officer's Cross) of the Order of Polonia; Honorary Member of the Institut Historique de France (Paris), and Honorary Member of the Petofi Society (Budapest). He is also author of several volumes of history, economics, and original verse (*The European Heritage*, 1930, *The Tide of Life and other Poems*, 1930, etc.), and has been described as "this amazingly talented Canadian scholar" by Roman Dyboski,

professor in the University of Kraków, who declares that his translations from the Polish "will secure a lasting place for him in the grateful thoughts of the entire nation".

WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS last appeared in this review with a poem, *The Sun*, in Number 8, and his latest book is *White Mule* (1937). For many years physician at Rutherford, New Jersey, he has been familiar to all readers of modern poetry since the publication of *Poems*, 1909, and his inclusion in the first Imagist anthology, 1913. He has contributed to almost every review of standing and his books include *The Tempers* (1913), *Al Que Quieve* (1917), *Kora in Hell* (1920), and *Sour Grapes* (1921).

H. D. has not sent us any poetry since December, 1935. We are grateful now to be able to print two groups, each written at a different time. H.D.'s latest publications are a translation of the *Ion of Euripides* (Chatto and Windus, 1937) and *The Hedgehog*, a prose story (Brendin Publishing Company, 1936).

JEAN-PAUL SARTRE was born in 1905, and is a schoolmaster in a Paris *lycée*. *The Wall* is a translation of a story which has appeared in *la nouvelle revue française*. Early in 1938 he is bringing out a book called *Les Aventures d'Antoine Roquentin* in the n.r.f. editions.

A. W. H. MACDONALD, a sergeant in the Royal Air Force, sent us his story from Scotland, where he is stationed.

ELLEN FITZGERALD writes from Paris "I hardly know what to say about myself, being more reader than writer. London is my favourite place to read". Nevertheless, she was for a long time a critic on the staff of the *Chicago Tribune*, and other papers; has translated Payalgette's *La Vie de Walt Whitman* and wrote, in the *New York Nation*, an article on Proust, which he himself commended.

OSBERT SITWELL'S contribution comes from his novel, *Those Were The Days*, from which we have already published *The Villa Angelica* (No. 2).

ELIZABETH BISHOP has been represented in LIFE AND LETTERS TO-DAY with a poem (No. 3) and two stories (Nos. 7 and 9). The story printed in this issue has also been chosen by Horace Gregory for inclusion in the first number of his *New Letters in America*, a biennial anthology.

MONTAGU SLATER (born 1902) has written novels, *The Second City* (1931), *Haunting Europe* (1934), reportage, *Stay Down Miner* (1936), plays, *Easter* 1916 (produced 1935, published 1936), *Stay Down Miner* (published under title *New Way Wins*, 1937), edited (1927, 1928),

*Maria Marten and Sweeney Todd.* The play printed here is one of a series to be presented by Helen Binyon's puppets with music by Benjamin Britten in spring, 1938.

WE HAVE ALWAYS been against the state of affairs by which, as frequently happens, a writer is paid more reviewing someone else's poetry than for publishing his own. For that reason, we are all the more grateful to our reviewers for agreeably accepting our proportionately lower scale of rates. The number increases rather than dwindles, and in this number we are happy to receive the collaboration of Dr. Raymond Firth, of the London School of Economics; of William Farr, recent editor of *Sight and Sound*; of Mark Benney, author of *Low Company*; of James Hanley, the prolific, and of Edgell Rickword, of *Left Review*.

Whilst greeting these, we would also thank those whom they join—Randall Swingler, Mulk Raj Anand, J. O. Wisdom, Stephen Spender, Ellen Hart, H. G. Porteus, Oswald Blakeston, Ernest Hudson, A. Gross, M. D. Cole, Trevor James, D. Sturge Moore, Eric Mosbacher, Thomas Good, and all the others whose knowledge and integrity cause our review pages to be among the best received of each issue.

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# L IFE AND ETTERS TO-DAY

VOL. 17

NO. 10

EDITORIAL

ONE WHOSE BIRTHDAY it is customary to celebrate towards the end of this month expressed tender willingness to allow, or suffer, "the little children to come unto Me". With every wish not to antagonize even the most literal supporters of that founder's Church, we cannot help observing that Peter himself, of all deep-sea fishermen the deepest, would be appalled at both the numbers and condition of little children who are now being precipitantly flung into the kingdom of heaven.

Most without heads, limbs, or intestines. Many dying after pain for which it seems there can be no excuse for having brought them into the world. Many others have experienced shocks, the full gravity of which will only be evident in adolescence or later life. No one will deny that Hitler would not have found sufficient supporters to turn a maniac into an all-mighty had it not been for 1914-30: none can say what will be the effect upon hundreds now juvenile who have been deprived not only of parents but of adult contrast and control to their growth. Easy enough to belabour the wildness of the Basque boys. When have Basques ever been anything but insistently individual? Not so easy, but far more worth while, to consider why it is that that independence should turn, when torn from its channels, into turbulent temper.

That is one of the results of war—modern war, which is no longer a profession, nor a protection of the helpless, but a plague without pity upon them. The parents of these children have died, gallantly fighting. When the history of this age comes to be written, if there remains a generation able to write or enough who will read, it will not be the personality parade that matters. It will not be the English, the Italians, or Germans who are honourably "mentioned". It will be the brave dauntless Basques, the grimly courageous Chinese. Yet it will be these, and the fathers of these, who will be responsible for the plight of posterity. No less, admittedly, than ourselves, but by circumstances more highly-lit, the parents of these children, of all war-orphaned children, are responsible for the fate of youngsters who have to live (or, as it seems, cease living under rarefied agony) after they have themselves left the scene of the loving which in most cases brought these children to birth.

It is no longer a question of anything so simple as "these did not ask to be born". No generation did, but most are prepared to pay the price. With what high verve, the International Brigade and the Doomed



Battalion of China have shown. Each one of us accepts the responsibility, not only of ourselves but of that laid on us by our forbears. Responsibility does not end with our own lives. That is what must be remembered. If the adults of twenty years ago, ten, even five, had been more cognizant, seen more clearly, would they not have known it their duty to prepare and fight for, a world fit for life—instead of giving life to children the world seems intent on destroying?

Basques are without homes; Chinese, in thousands, without bodies. These are facts. We ask you to be emotional about them, because you ought to help. We realize that no one does help as much as they might, because onslaught of emotion brings reaction. "Nothing to do with us," "Whatever we do, we can't stop it," "It's gone too far." But how far is not yet seen. We have seen what has happened to the bodies of these children, at present Abyssinian, Basque, and Chinese. Do we know what will happen to their minds? Who is going to look after them if we don't? Do we imagine we can continue to safeguard only ourselves if war-shock is to be left to run its festering course in a generation about to come to power? Not emotionally, cynically if you will, but economically we would prefer, we insist on this point. Pity can be exhausted; policy ensures its own returns. Before most else fails, we declare bitterly that it is politics to remember that the blindness of 1914-seared parents has been visited on to-day's children. To use the only finally efficacious argument, does it "pay" to allow the present or future generation to be the result, and ourselves the cause, of blindness? It is in no spirit of cooing over "little innocent children" that we say this. It is rather that children, like states, have a way of growing up. We have seen, in Europe, what happens when "innocence", through neglect and maltreatment, turns into insolent ignorance. Once, the Massacre of Innocents was followed by a Flight into Egypt.

We appear to have seen to it that there is no longer any Egypt to fly to: the last two great democracies, America and France, are not having exactly an easy time of it. Financial figures show what pressure is being brought to bear on Roosevelt in the States, and what is going on behind the scenes in France is frequently clearer than what is enacted in the political arena. Nevertheless, Roosevelt made his gesture and France, despite internal crisis, has, with its Exposition, given to the world an example not only of culture and controlled showmanship, but of domestic solidarity which has more effect than any number of conferences or switched-over coronations. It would be hard to exaggerate this achievement. France has a hostile country on one side, a friendly one it is unable to help on the other, and we all know what on the rest. Yet she has been able to put out, as big business, progressive politics. She, who suffered most from the last war, has learnt most. She dare be herself. That is her lesson to the world. And it is a lesson not only to nations but to individuals. That is why, though it may not be our business, we

find it relevant to suggest we should look after the children there are, before leaving any more there may be none to look after, who will have no wish to look after themselves.

This editorial has taken on a rather diocesan note, so it may as well end like a sermon—with a plea for the offertory. Contributions for Spanish ambulances and medical aid may be sent to, among others, the Holborn and West Central London Committee for Spanish Medical Aid, 6 Gordon Square, W.C. 1; the Scottish Ambulance Unit, 5 Clevedon Road, Glasgow, W. 2, and the Wounded Aid Committee of the International Brigade, 1 Litchfield Street, London, W.C. 2. For Basques there is the National Joint Committee for Spanish Refugees, 53 Marsham Street, S.W. 1, which incorporates the Friends of Spain (11 Hart Street, W.C. 1). For China, in addition to the Lord Mayor's Fund, there is the China Inland Mission, of Newington Green, N. 10. Finally, for English children, we would suggest the Children's Clinic of the Institute of Child Psychology, 26 Warwick Avenue, W. 9, and the Nursery Schools Committee of the Save the Children Fund, for which Flora Robson has done so much. It does not matter which is sent to. Remember only—a little less on ourselves means much more to many others.

## NEWS REEL

### SPANISH AMBULANCES

TWO THOUSAND SIX hundred feet above sea-level, on the plateau between Madrid and Valencia, a luxury hotel has been turned into a convalescent home for wounded. The medical staff is American, Canadian, and English, with two Spanish nurses. One of the patients is a Basque who came from America to fight for his country, but was torpedoed off the coast and is recovering, ashamedly, from pneumonia. Another is a German, recuperating from having given too-frequent blood-transfusions. Others are English ambulance drivers, wounded while on duty. The Holborn ambulance, since the Jarama fighting, has been lent to the Americans and is in constant use; the Hendon small ambulance was put out of action during the Brunete fighting but is now with the British Battalion again; the Battersea ambulance is used for evacuating wounded from the front line. The Welsh ambulance was on the Cordoba front for six weeks, and the driver, Richard Rees, who also drove one on the Brunete front, wants to remind us that "all our ambulances have suffered from shot and shell and you in England must realize that they are the means of saving the lives of many men". The Belchite front-line hospital consists of four pavilions or wooden huts. It was treating wounded twelve hours after the arrival of the staff, who had travelled in trucks for two days in order to get there. Five nurses assisted at one hundred and sixty operations in twelve days, besides attending several hundred other cases.

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### LEOPARD-SKINS IN LEICESTER SQUARE

Iceland now has a Left Book-Club. The members at present total seventeen hundred, or one fifth of the inhabitants of the capital, Reykjavik. Twice the population of that city can be accommodated in the cinemas of Leicester Square, where the seating now comes to a little over ten thousand. . . . We know because, struck by the buildings now rising round Shakespeare's statue in the centre, we went into the figures. The Empire leads with three thousand two hundred. The new Odeon has two thousand and sixteen, and the Leicester Square eighteen hundred and thirteen, which is the same, all but thirteen, as will be possessed by the Warner theatre, on the site of Daly's. Of the small theatres the Monseigneur has seats for two hundred and seventy-eight, the one literally under the wing of the Empire will seat, our notes say,

" five hundred ? " and if you want more, there is the Cameo, adjoining the Odeon, with seats for four hundred and seventy-nine. . . . Whilst on statistics, we might mention that the Odeon, apart from being the only cinema in London with (artificial) leopard-skin seats, uses six thousand electric lamps of various kinds, and supplies every member of the audience with twelve hundred cubic feet of fresh air an hour. There is also a picture.

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### TELEVISION THEATRE

Through the courtesy of His Master's Voice, we were able, in company with the choreographer, to watch the televising of Fokine's ballet, *Carnaval*. The television theatre in Oxford Street held about twenty people, seated before three sets, ranged in a row, reminiscent of the nickleodeons of our childhood. We do not know what Fokine thought of the broadcast, but we ourselves were interested in the way in which some attempt had been made to adapt the stage technique and evolve a television one, in order to keep and transmit the essence of the original. The size of the television set does not permit of both the blue sofas being used ; so fade-ins and superimpositions in film manner were used, not only to make one sofa convey the impression made by the two, but to ensure continuity. Similarly with Pierrot, for whose sitting by the foot-lights there was not the room that there is on the stage. Though these devices are taken from the cinema, television seemed to do far more in presenting ballet than the cinema has attempted, and we found the performance interesting in itself and suggestive of possibilities. Another item we have had the opportunity of seeing on television screens has been a news-reel. We did not find this so successful, for the reduction to the size of the television screen made there seem too much to look at. If films are to be televised, they must be special kinds of film and the speed at present must be slower. We also find that the ordinary broadcast volume of voice, roughly life-size, accords ill with the small figures in the viewing window. They seem far away, unrelated to this world. When one muffles one's ears, the illusion of reality is greater.

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### RAIL, ROAD AND PLANE

Circumstances have lately caused us to assist at welcoming an unusual number of film-personalities to this country. Mamoulian, Chevalier, Lionel Barrymore, Jack Conway (maker of *Tale of Two Cities*), Maureen O'Sullivan again, and still they came, by every manner of transport.

William Powell, quietly, by air; Robert Taylor, noisily, by train. Powell, whom we find irrelevant on the screen, was much more to the point in person. "Robot Tailor" (who said that?), reaching Claridge's by way of the luggage-lift at Waterloo, took it all so calmly that he didn't seem a person at all, only a nice if naïve phenomenon, that seemed a little less life-like than the "olde college" set on which we later met him at Denham. Finally, there was Gracie Fields, welcoming Victor McLaglen. Just as they turned Denham into Oxford for Taylor, so they turned the winter garden at the Dorchester into a film-studio for Gracie. She was acting as hostess to receive McLaglen, and a film was made of his arrival. He had arrived sometime previously but—this is what we like about films—he did it again, for the benefit of the cameras, and the public that goes to news-reels. We, the press, were there to tell the public that what they saw wasn't real. Because, in order to "arrive", McLaglen had to leave the party, with Gracie shouting after "Don't forget the daises". He then re-arrived, presented the bouquet, while Gracie greeted him, cameras clicked and microphones did whatever they do do when they are working.

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## TWO BIBLES

It may seem a little late in the day to draw attention to the new Bible, "designed to be read as literature,"—that is to say, with the poetry printed as poetry and the prose no longer divided into "verses". Nevertheless, we would express our satisfaction with the Introduction, by Laurence Binyon, who observes "though the Bible represents one of the greatest literatures of the world, it has for centuries been studied apart from its literary form and value . . . the English Bible is presented in a form forbidding to the reader and even, except in expensive editions, injurious to the eyesight". All this has been remedied in the half-guinea version of Messrs. Heinemann. It is a small point but worth making, that the table of dates of the Books at the end should do much towards making the many readers this edition will win, feel "at home". Even so, there are other points which we think few readers know and perusal of this volume drove us to our shelves, to find another edition, which tells us that there are 810,697 words in the Bible, and 3,566,480 letters. The word "Lord" occurs 46,227 times, the word "reverend" only once. And the only letter of the alphabet missing from the twenty-first verse of the seventh chapter of Ezra is "J"—which may surprise some, considering how many names, including "Jehovah", begin with it.

## A RAILWAY SONG

This information is in an edition published by Goode Brothers, described on the cover as being of " Clerkenwell Road " and on the first page as of " Clerkenwell Green ". It is not an imposing volume, being only the size of a box of matches and bound in black paper. But it includes a song or hymn which comments interestingly on two books reviewed in this issue—*The Railway Age* (p. 158) and *Victorian Street Ballads* (p. 159). It is called *Railway to Heaven*, and as might be expected " Of truth divine the rails are made And on the Rock of Ages laid. The rails are fixed in chairs of Love, Firm as the throne of God above ". Metaphor and simile continue, until " My son says God, give me thy heart, Make haste—or else the train will start." There is no date on this Bible, but we find some indication of the period in the opening lines—" O what a deal we hear and read about railways and railway speed. Of lines which are or may be made ; And selling shares is quite a trade '. That seems to us to date it well in the early railway boom. But we should be glad to know more of this ballad.

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## A FRENCH SINGER

Marianne Oswald, with her Medusa's head of crimson locks, is a flaming personality who arouses ardent enthusiasm or undisguised antipathy, according to whether the listener enjoys or rejects her uncompromising technique and its explosive results. She had not previously appeared in England until she was invited over by the Anglo-French Art and Travel Society last October. The more successful part of her programme on that occasion consisted of songs and monologues which had been specially written and composed for her : the two Cocteau poems, *Anna la Bonne*, *La Dame de Monte Carlo*, and a group of excellent songs with words by Jacques Prévert and music by Joseph Kosma, the composer of the musical score of *La Grande Illusion*. These brought out all the dramatic inflections of her voice and mime, and made an indelible impression on her audience. Marianne Oswald is not a singer in the usually accepted sense of that word : her strong card is *recitativo* rather than *bel canto*. For this reason, curiously enough, the Brecht-Weill songs from " Happy End " and " L'Opéra de Quatre Sous " did not altogether come off. The melody of these songs should be explicit in the accompaniment and implicit in the voice ; and here the Youly Tepley Harmonica Boys, who had provided such a discreet musical background for her group of " street " songs, were unable to do full justice to Weill's melodic line, which definitely needs instrumental colouring to point its contrasts and to strengthen the bold calligraphic flourish of such a tune as the refrain in the *Song of Mandalay*.

## RECORDS RECOMMENDED

Re-recording of famous artists of the past has become familiar. The Parlophone list contains an example of an interesting development, with a record played by Grieg on one side, and by Theodor Leschetizky on the other. The pieces were played, actually, in 1906. Gramophone discs then made pianoforte playing sound like a banjo, but these performances were cut on the Welte piano rolls, which had reached a more scientific development. The new record (PO 70) is recorded from those. Haydn's 96th Symphony is recorded for the first time (played by the Vienna Philharmonic under Bruno Walter) on His Master's Voice, who also have new Toscanini, Schnabel, and Menuhin discs, and continue their ballet series with a set of *Les Cent Baisers*. . . . We would point out that Basque children themselves have made a record (Parlophone R 2367), and that Paul Robeson is giving them the royalties from his H.M.V. B 8604, which includes two spirituals and a recitation of a poem by Langston Hughes. . . . H.M.V. also earn our gratitude with another record by the Quintette of the Hot Club of France (B 8629) and we notice that "swing" is now followed by "jam" music on Decca, who have a new Ellington; that the Lecuona Cubans now do their rumbas for Columbia (FB 1780) for whom, also, Maurice Evans has recorded an album of excerpts from "Richard II", in which he was so successful in New York (DX 792-96, 24s. complete).

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## GAS WITHOUT TEARS

Outside the town hall, shining bravely in its new paint, stood a van labelled "Decontamination and Fire-fighting". We didn't think the driving cabin looked exactly the kind of thing best suited to withstand splinters from bomb and shell. Then we reflected that what the local landladies so rightly called the "de-continuation" truck wouldn't operate till the raid was over, so we hied us inside, to see how it was proposed we live through it. We found, quite pleasantly. Of course, they didn't like our suggesting that all the preparations for strengthening walls with sandbags or boxes of earth didn't take into account the probability of bombs hitting roofs, first; they called us Cambridge scientists for that, but we've been in worse company, and survived long enough to go through the Refuge Room. What we liked about this was the things in it. We took a list—official—which ran: "roll-call of all who should be present; table and chairs; portable washstand or hand-basin; a screen comma for privacy; chamber pot, toilet paper; washing things; disinfectant; plenty of water for drinking, washing, and for damping the door blanket; a food chest ("air-tight jars will do as well"); tinned food, tin opener; plates, knives, forks, etc.; books,

writing materials, cards, etc. (*Dear Ethel, hoping this finds you as it leaves me*), a bucket or box of sand with a shovel or fire-extinguisher ; a dark heavy curtain-hanging to obscure the light ; spare blankets for re-sealing the window if it should be blown in (we like that " if " ) ; pots of paste for pasting over cracks and window panes ; a mattress to protect the window and to lie on ; blankets, eiderdowns, and warm coverings ; the wireless set, gramophone and records (*Lead, kindly light*) ; additional cold food " ; to this is added " Things you probably possess already " —candles, matches, hammer and nails, pieces of string, clean rags, needles, cotton and thread, scissors, and Things to Collect—an electric torch, large sheets of thick brown paper, gummed paper, adhesive tape, spare blankets, at least one pair of non-inflammable dark-lens glasses, a bottle of disinfectant, a small first-aid box. We asked the attendant where we were to keep all these things, even granted we could afford to collect them. She said there was no need to set apart a room as a museum, as we put it ; they could be gathered together in two hours. She didn't like it when we said that if we had two hours' notice of an air raid, we'd be well on our way out of London. So we moved off to look at the Gas Proofing Company's safety rooms. Very chic they were, all oiled silk, in what you might call ways and means that even Messel hasn't thought of. We admired, against ourselves, the childishness of exhibits, (*a*) a wall this thick's no good, (*b*) a wall this thick is better—let's hope landlords noticed, for most of the borough are one and two room apartment-dwellers. But the saddest childishness of all was to see estimable working-women trying on gas-masks while their children thought it was a new game of Red Indians. For the very young it is known there are no gas masks. That may be why we were surrounded by kids when we came out. " Take us in mister," " Come on, be a sport. Pretend to be our dad,"—as if it were Christmas at Woolworth's, where, incidentally, we notice that Japanese and Chinese are included among the tin-soldiers.

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## FROM SHANGHAI VIA SIBERIA

Receiving *T'ien Hsia* we turned first to the editorial comments on the Japanese aggression. Dignity is a quality for which, on the whole, the West has substituted other more practical, if shoddier, substitutes ; but, we know of no other which would give such certainty to spokesmen of a country enduring what China is enduring. Though " edited to the tune of bombs and guns ", *T'ien Hsia* states quietly that " with so much barbarism about in the world, we can do with a little interest in the humanities. " So, after regretting that " much against our will we have to fight the very pupil to whom we have taught the alphabet of civiliza-



tion ", and making no comment on the let-down (perhaps it is expected) of European " Powers ", the editors repeat that *T'ien Hsia* is " dedicated to reminding thinking men and women about the business of living and loving." In the latest issues to reach us, this is maintained by good articles on Chinese Drama to-day by Yao Hsin-nung (see Notes on Contributors); the Soviet Theatre of To-day (in which it is interesting to learn that there are eight hundred professional theatres in the Union and in which, also, the strictures on Tairov ring a familiar note). We are glad to learn of the Chinese Jews of K'aifeng, of the younger artists of Shanghai, and of the statesman and educator, T'ang Wen-Chih, who, brought up very strictly, formed at the early age of seven the habit of reading by moonlight, a habit bearing no slight resemblance to that of the ancient Chinese scholar who read by light of fireflies. This seriously impaired his eyesight and "... was the chief cause of his later blindness." But " by the time he was fourteen he had already finished studying the Four Books of the Five Classics ". We found the merit of our contributor, Pa Chin's story *Star* marred by a haphazard translation, but insist that, as things are at the moment, this and an excellent article on *The Military in Japanese Government* (" The Japanese House of Representatives, elected on a democratic basis of universal manhood suffrage, does not control the Cabinet " which is " responsible only to the Emperor (and factually, of course, to the military clansmen)—make, *T'ien Hsia* more than ordinarily indispensable.

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### APPROVED PERIODICALS

From other countries of which we approve come: *The Booster*, a perversely self-conscious (" Art doesn't interest us. If we're artists, it's as a by-product ") but refreshingly Marxian, in of course the film-sense, monthly issued from Paris. The October number included a saga from Greenland, Henry Miller's *I am a Wild Park*, which we ourselves hadn't time to print, and an excerpt from Lawrence Durrell's *Black Book* which, to use the language of *The Booster*, almost, and entirely, justifies Henry Miller's blurb for it (published from 18 Villa Seurat, Paris, 14e). ... *Wales* is a nationalist quarterly published at a shilling from Penybont Farm, Llangadock, Carmarthenshire (and *that* happens to be the address of Keidrych Rhys, whom see in Notes on Contributors, though he started it after we took his poetry). The autumn number included good stories by Rhys Davies, Glyn Jones, and Dylan Thomas, some poems, for most of which we didn't care so much about, and a paper on the *New Welsh Stage* (by Ronald Elway Mitchell). Contributors, present

and future, include Idris Davies, Ken Etheridge, Vernon Watkins, Ewart Evans, Robert Herring, Margiad Evans, etc. *Wales* has a long way to go, but, like ourselves, improves with each issue and is a valuable indication of what is being done, inside and outside the Principality, by young Welsh authors using English. . . . The American review, *Poetry*, in October celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary with a number including poems from contributors new and old, among them Carl Sanoburg, Wallace Stevens, Horace Gregory, William Carlos Williams, and Louise Bogan. In view of its past achievement, it would be impertinent to say more than wish it a continuance of esteem in the next quarter-century. . . . Recent issues of *Mesures* have contained translations from the Danish of Soren Kierkegaard, from the Arabic of Omar Ibn Al Faridh, the Spanish of Amado Nervo, and the English of Ernest Fenellosa (on Chinese Calligraphy Considered as a Poetic Art). . . . The November *Commune* (6 frs, 24 Rue Racine, Paris, 6e) had two songs by Jean Richard Bloch, but the main contributions are a moving tribute from Aragon to Paul Vaillant-Couturier, printed alongside extracts from the latter's unfinished work, *Souvenirs d'enfance*.

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## MAKE-UP

Our insistence in No. 9 that there was method behind the apparent madness of our make-up met with approval, so we will again outline our principle of construction by complement and/or contrast. In this issue, we count ourselves fortunate in being able to print André Gide "on" Thomas Mann alongside Thomas Mann "on" the position of German writers in exile. We follow this cultural essay with an article on the culture of China by Yao Hsin-nung; it would have been longer, but he only lately arrived within reach and it is a wonder that he has been able to write us anything at all. William Empson is at present out of reach, being in China; he left us his paper, with instructions to cut as we liked. We preferred, however, to keep it intact and publish in two sections, the second of which will appear in March. Empson, bridging China and criticism, leads on to studies of Polish poetry and of the novels of Dorothy M. Richardson; from criticism to creative work, in Bryher's memories of Egypt, whilst William Carlos Williams, himself a poet, comes before four poems by H. D. As these were written at different times, we have, at the author's request, printed them in two groups. The Theatre Section is filled with a play by Montagu Slater. Apart from its intrinsic value, there are three points which we bring to readers' and reviewers' attention. First, that it is written for puppets (and puppetry is a flourishing branch of English theatrical experiment). Second, it is in verse. Third, it is in Lancashire; part of our platform

has always been to remind readers that English is not the only language in which literature is written, and an extension of that is the realization that Southern English is not the only language of this island.

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### TURN OF THE YEAR

We hope to follow this play with scenes from Yao Hsin-nung's *Yellow Man's Burden*, which he has promised to let us see on completion. Of Aragon's play, we have no further news, but can assure our readers that there will be room for it when it comes. We are sorry there was not room in this Winter Number for an essay on detective novels by Vincent Brun, author of *Alcibiades*, but the seasonal spate of new books prevented this. As we like at a time of present-giving to suggest books that can be given to juveniles without offence, the review section became a house that took in many mansions in a way far from heavenly to a harassed staff. *The Private Lives of the Detectives* will, therefore, be published in March, together with a short life of that self-set-up censor, Thomas Bowdler. Bryher's *Egypt* will be continued, and Dr. Stefan Hock is furnishing us with his theatrical memoirs. Architecture will be filled by John Madge, whose study of modern trends arrived too late for this number, and cinema by an article from Michael Powell, director of the fine Shetland film, *Edge of the World*. Finally, in stories, we have two finds, in the shape of a young American author, Bernice Elliot, and some work by Mary Butts, unpublished at the time of her lamented death. Stefan Einarsson writes on Gunnar Gunnarsson and Jean Casson has granted an interview specially for LIFE AND LETTERS TO-DAY to Fernando de la Milla, of the *Heraldo de Madrid*, the oldest Republican newspaper. In our editorial capacity, we therefore face the New Year with some confidence and can only hope that in other respects both ourselves and all those who so sympathetically support us in return for our attempts to satisfy them, will find equally fortunate co-operation.

## PREFACE

TO SOME RECENT WRITINGS BY THOMAS MANN

By ANDRÉ GIDE

I FEEL IT a great honour to write the preface to this little book. Thomas Mann is one of the few persons we can admire to-day without reservation. There are no weaknesses in his work as there are none in his life. His retort to one of Hitlerism's absurd insults is worthy of the author of *Buddenbrooks*, the *Magic Mountain*, and the *Trilogy of Joseph*. The importance of his work gives importance to his gesture and informs it with far-reaching significance.

Henceforward Thomas Mann is a Czecho-Slovak. I visited him at Kuessnacht, near Zuerich, where he has chosen to exile himself. It was with emotion that I once more met with that gentleness of manner and exquisite amenity that are so delightful a covering to great firmness of character and inflexible resolution. I admire the same manners in his wife also, and recognize them too in his children, with sometimes an added touch of charming turbulence.

For Thomas Mann has not been banished. The Germans of Germany lay stress upon this.

Nothing, they say, forced him to leave a country from which no special proscription had excluded him. He might have stayed had he chosen to, as we ourselves have done, and recognized like us that it is perfectly possible to accommodate oneself to a régime which after all asks nothing from us but acquiescence. He preferred to be self-willed. So much the worse for him. What followed was his own fault—the confiscation of his possessions in Bavaria, the loss of his rights, and finally the deprivation of his German nationality and the Bonn University title.

Thomas Mann took no part in public affairs. "I was born," he says in the fine letter that follows,<sup>1</sup> "to bear witness in serenity rather than in martyrdom and to bring the world a message of peace rather than to nurse strife and hatred." No doubt; but he was "born to bear witness". That is his rôle—the rôle of a man of letters; and when a despotic government sets out to subject men's minds, it is taking part in politics not to allow one's mind to be subjected. What Sainte-Beuve said of André Chénier's "politics" may be applied to him: "It was not a concerted and continuous activity; it was an individual protest, logical in form, lyrical in expression—the protest of an honest man who defies those he refutes and is not afraid to bring down upon himself the executioner's blade." Fortunately there is no question here of the guillotine; but Thomas Mann has a perfect right to say: "If I had stayed in Germany or gone back there, I should

<sup>1</sup> This preface refers to the Bonn letter, published by Mann

probably not be alive." Thomas Mann is constrained by his very integrity to play a political part in a country where honest men are in the way and looked upon as factious partisans. As for us, we love Germany enough to recognize her voice far more in Thomas Mann's protest than in the letter of the Dean of Bonn University. In this protest his indignation is still restrained; it appears far more openly when it is a question of Spain in the third of the papers collected here. And it is an admirable thing that his indignation should become livelier as his personal interest is less involved. This is a sign, too, of the absolute sincerity of these pages; for not only are they written by the same man, but with the same ink, in the same spirit; an equal conviction inspires them. No, they are not dictated by personal interest. Mann is genuinely on the side of the spiritual—a humanist in the fullest meaning of the term.

"Humanism," he explains, in a speech delivered at Budapest on the occasion of a discussion organized recently by the Institute of Intellectual Co-operation, "humanism has nothing scholastic about it; it has nothing to do directly with learning. Humanism rather is a spirit, an intellectual frame of mind, a state of the human soul which implies justice, liberty, knowledge, and tolerance; doubt too, not as an end in itself, but as a means of seeking truth; solicitous effort to free this truth from all the presumptions of those who try to hide it under a bushel." And to begin with, he says: "Would it not be best and simplest to consider humanism as the *contrary of fanaticism*?"

Humanism, as thus represented by Thomas Mann, may seem in periods of calm to come near a kind of smiling scepticism *à la Renan*; but let there be no mistake; if the time comes when force attempts to subjugate the spirit, to submit it to some arbitrary and brutal authority, the genuine humanist at once becomes conscious of the part he has to play; he refuses to yield, he opposes to material force another force—that unconquerable force of the mind whose shining virtue every tyrant must recognize, whether he will or no.

I have quoted the lines given above because the speech in which they occur does not figure in this volume. But all the pages that follow here have the same authentic and flawless ring. They contain certain truths which should induce young people to reflect; and in particular this among others: "Young people (of to-day) know nothing of culture in its highest, deepest meaning. They do not know what it is to work upon themselves. They have ceased to understand individual responsibility and find their ease and comfort in collective life. *Collective life compared with individual life is the sphere of facility*—a facility which goes to the length of the worst self-indulgence. This generation's only desire is to get rid of its personal self. What it wants, what it likes, is intoxication. In another war it will find its latter end, in which our civilization too will perish."

The flood of barbarism which Thomas Mann anxiously watches breaking over our old world has not yet too greatly affected France ; and this, perhaps, is the only reason that I, a Frenchman, feel slightly less gloomy than he. But how is it possible not to acknowledge the justice of the reflexions he develops in his *Warning to Europe* ? "The highest values are no longer safe from destruction," says he, "nor perhaps the fate of our whole civilization." He refuses to hold the war of 1914 responsible for the present debasement. His *Buddenbrooks*, in which he paints the "story of a family's decline" in the course of three generations, bears witness to the acuteness of his anxiety as far back as 1901. "I repeat," he writes to-day, "that the deterioration of European culture is not the result of the war which only hastened it and made it more evident." And with great subtlety, and great sagacity too, he sets out to show that culture, when it has reached a certain stage, is driven to take up a position against itself. "In all humanism there is an element of weakness," he remarks, "which comes from its repugnance to fanaticism, its tolerance, and its inclination to indulgent scepticism, in a word, from its native kind-heartedness. And this may, in certain circumstances, prove fatal to it."

Doubtless the present dictatorial régimes are a grave danger to culture ; but Thomas Mann sees the worst danger in the fact that nowadays reason is commonly flouted and that the reasonable human being tends to be considered less intelligent than the man who denies reason in the name of Life.

"The world is perhaps already lost," he concludes. "It certainly is, if it does not shake off this state of hypnosis and once more become conscious of itself."

The following pages are directed to this end. And thanks to them it is possible for me to say : "No, Thomas Mann, no ! Our world is not yet lost. It cannot be, as long as a voice like yours is raised in warning. As long as consciences like yours remain watchful and faithful, we shall not lose confidence—we shall not despair."

(Translated by D. Bussy.)

# MEASURE AND VALUE<sup>1</sup>

By THOMAS MANN

WE CAN SEE many a reader making a long face at the sound of our title. "So polite, so conservative?" they seem to say, "So high-brow, so esoteric, even? Could you think of no name with a more ringing appeal, no more rousing title for a German periodical which means to work in freedom to-day and has the power to do so? Do you think that so tame and academic a slogan will be listened to, in these days of professional demagoguery, of expert and unlimited revolutionary propaganda, when the air resounds with cries of attacking, advancing, and over-running, and bold salutes to the 'dawn of youth'—or what vain-gloriously calls itself by that name?"

Well, the truth is, we are convinced that before long people will have ceased to listen to these sounding blasts from a lying propaganda of future triumphs. Before long they will be greeted with disgust and shrugs—indeed, they are even now so greeted by young and old. The revolutionary terminology is hopelessly discredited and compromised, it is utterly worn out, having served these ten years and more to persuade the herd-minded citizen to think of himself as a revolutionary. It is a shabby, scabby, herd-minded world where these bold slogans echo to-day—certainly a world as remote as possible from the world of art, of quality, and distinction, whence we have drawn the words which we have chosen to stand for our faith and our endeavour.

For these words, *measure* and *value*, are above all conceptions and symbols from the domain of the arts. *Measure*: that is order, that is light, the music of creation and the creative world. It means also what is achieved, what is wrested from chaos; it is the anti-barbaric, the triumph of form, the triumph of the human. It does not mean the average, the mediocre—art is altogether the sphere of boldness and hazards, it always goes to extremes, it never lacks the "trace of audacity" without which, according to Goethe, "no talent is thinkable." It abhors the mediocre, as it abhors the trivial, the tasteless, and the low, the despicable cliché; for it is pure quality, it stands for the unsatisfied, insatiable demand. And its *measure*, which it bears within itself, is also the measure which is applied: the test, the judgment, the scale upon which it is dangerous to be weighed, for it soon becomes more than simply a test in matters of taste and pronounces upon values far beyond æsthetic ones, antecedent and fundamental to these. It is, in short, value itself, in the most basic sense of the word. "To-day," says Goethe, the artist, "it is a question of what one weighs upon the scale of humanity. All else is vanity."

<sup>1</sup> See *Notes on Contributors*.

Artists we will be, anti-barbarians ; honouring measure, upholding values, loving the free and the bold and scorning the petty concern of the small-minded ; scorning it with particular profundity and fervour when it serves the fickle mob as the garb of revolution. Some radical-minded intellectuals hold the view that art is " played out ". She has fallen prey, they think, to vapidty ; she ceases to grow ; declined upon a false and fatuous æstheticism, she shirks her proper role in the struggle. That is not my view. On the contrary, it seems to me that art, as civilization, as the human attitude, has never been more exemplary, more useful, yes, more liberating, than she is to-day. Always I have seen in art the pattern of the human ; in the life of the artist, human life raised to its highest power ; humanity as it were in itself and in its very essence. I am convinced that the human conscience which to-day is rising anew out of depths of suffering, with a new-born feeling, human and religious, for the mystery, the appealing and pathetic riddle of humanity with its membership in two worlds, that of the spirit and that of nature—I am convinced that this new human conscience will not lessen the respect paid to art, will not detract from humanity's love and need of her, but on the contrary will increase them, adding lustre to her brilliance and heightening the veneration which is her due. She is of all powers the most human and the most friendly to humanity, mediating as she does between spirit and life. There can be no greater mistake than to conceive her irony—the irony of all mediating influences as a blithe nihilistic avoidance of the struggle and of human duty. She, whose joyful endeavour it is to permeate nature with the human and to take from nature what she needs for the creative heightening of life ; she, who is the kindling spirit in matter, the instinctive urge to humanization, to the shaping of life in spiritual form (for there is such a natural instinct)—how should she cease to function in an age when the world—always dilatory and reluctant in such matters—needs more than ever this spiritual reshaping ?

But the real ground of my belief in the exemplary mission of art lies in her characteristic and essential combination of new and old, traditional and novel : her revolutionary traditionalism. " The artist," says Goethe, " must have origins, must know whence he comes." An aristocratic pronouncement, born of proud loyalty to all the backgrounds of the individual artist, to everything inborn and inbred, to the harvest reaped from early experience. Yet he who uttered it has also said : " Withdraw from dead matter, let us love the living ! " In 1823, at a company in his house a toast was drunk in good bourgeois fashion " To memory ! " And the old man grew unexpectedly wroth. " I cherish no memory, in your sense of the word ! " cried he. " That is a clumsy way of expressing oneself. When we have met with something great, or beautiful, or significant, we are not to call it back from without or summon it, as it were, to appear before us. No, it must have woven itself into our being



from the start, must become one with us and live on to work in the creation of a new and better I. There is no past, to which one may look back with regret ; there is only *an eternally new, shaping itself out of the expanded elements of the past* ; and genuine longing must be productive, must always shape a new and better thing out of what has gone before."

Splendid words of revolt against sentimentalism and false piety ! Typical artist words. For in them lies the essence of the world of art : the new, ever shaping itself from the " expanded elements " of the past, ever mindful of its traditions, ever receptive towards the future, aristocratic and revolutionary at once. Verily it is that which can serve as a model to the time and to life—in short, conservative revolution.

Conservative revolution. The phrase, once uttered by artists and intellectuals—what has been made of it, by the forces of stupidity, stubbornness, ill-will, of literate barbarism ! What corruption of youth, what world-darkening mischief and destruction of freedom, what criminal philistinism ! For they have not, these evil-thinkers and evil-doers, interpreted it as genuine longing for a new and better state. " Conservative revolution " meant to them a revolution to preserve the false and decadent ; a regimen of terror, employed to hold at bay with all possible means—by preference the basest—the forces imperative to life.

What we have at heart is the rescue of this conception from the corruption it has undergone and its restoration to its original meaning. Restoration, indeed, in a general sense, rescue from confusion and moral lawlessness, seems to me the most pressing task of every intellectual and man of good will. And hence the title of this sheet. The truth is, that measure and value are lost in our time. Whole countries, groups, parties, and party dogmas to-day assert and pursue unrestrained their subjective values ; every humane and lofty, every universal criterion has been frightfully done to death in the mad, destructive struggle which is tearing our world in pieces. The mind has need of a sovereign standard by which to measure the facts of a case, a man, his work. For from such a standard they receive their human value. We all of us feel this. And to believe that such a measure is indispensable is to wish to re-establish it. But that does not mean that we yearn for the past, rather that we wish to shape it anew out of conditions existing to-day ; to re-work it and effect it afresh. Such a task is as conservative as it is revolutionary. It is conservative in that it would preserve something which has heretofore comprised the dignity of mankind : the idea of a supra-personal, supra-party, supra-national measure and value ; in that it would direct our minds, our hearts, and our wills towards the goal of such a measure, above parties, belonging to humanity. But it is revolutionary, in that it would not take over such a measure untried out of any past whatever but would undertake to test it in utter sincerity upon present conditions, and achieve it afresh out of existing situations.

Truth, sincerity—in them art and morality become one. We are no

æsthetes, no exquisites of immoralism. The artistic judgment "good" has never a merely æsthetic significance. Nothing is "good"—certainly not to-day—which does not weigh upon the "scale of humanity". The barbarous is to us not only the æsthetically but also the morally worthless and base. It is first and foremost the *lie*—in the boundless scorn for which artist and moralist are one. "All laws and systems go back to a single one: the truth." Again the voice of art, the voice of Goethe, no man of theories, no radical, but a mind receptive to life. We would be as little radical-intellectuals as æsthetes. Morality is not a theoretical field; it deals with life. The problem of truth, truth as absolute idea and as conditioned by life, truth eternal and truth mutable, is of the last importance to humanity. "What is truth?" asked the sceptical Roman man of the world. But not only he; for philosophy itself, the critical, self-inquiring mind, asks the same. If it is life's conscience, it is also his own—he knows that he is responsible to life. He is receptive; he grants that life has need of the truth which will increase life. "Only that is true which advantages life." The sentence may pass; but to it must be added, that morality may not sink in the bog of cynicism: "Only the truth advantages life." And since truth is not given us once and for all, but is mutable, the more profoundly, the more sensitively and conscientiously careful for her the intellectual man must be, the more watchful for the stirrings of the time-spirit, for changes in the garment of the truth—in other words, for the will of God, which the intellectual man must serve, regardless of the hatred of the dull, the fearful, and the insensible, of all those interested to preserve the false and bad.

It is a task demanding caution and boldness at once, as it shapes itself in the minds of the reasonably well-disposed and God-fearing man. But what happens to-day? An infamous pragmatism has been set up in the heart of Europe to-day. It refuses to make distinctions between truth and lies; it denies mind and spirit in favour of interest; it unscrupulously commits or condones crimes if they forward its interest—or what it conceives to be so; it shrinks not at all from falsification, rather it calls falsification truth, provided it is useful, in its interpretation of the word. And since all morality is referable back to truth, since truth and right are one and the same, right being only truth applied, the type of human being which invented this theory of truth tells the civilized world in its face: "Right is what profits the nation."

That is infamous. There is nothing more infamous than it, it is infamy itself and the source and fount of all that is infamous. Immorality and philistinism in it become one; it is the absolutely bad, it is barbarism. It has been asserted in German, therefore it is not enough that it has been denied in other languages, it must be denied in German; and this imperative necessity alone would justify the founding of a free German periodical. Goethe declared: "I prefer the harmful truth to

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useful error. A harmful truth is useful, because it can be harmful for a moment and then leads to other truths which must be ever more and more useful ; whereas a useful error is harmful, because it can be useful but for a moment and leads to other errors which are more and more harmful." That is no intellectualism ; nor is it outworn liberalism. It is a sense for truth as a sense for the true good conduct of life. The same great German has also said : " Patriotism corrupts history." The most decided and decisive contradiction to that degenerated definition of truth and right. There speaks the voice of the great, free, intellectual German people, beloved of the peoples of the earth and object of our patriotic longing.

They tell us that Germany of ours is powerless now. They tell us its political greatness, its rights on this earth, can no longer be served by any human. It must be hard, must be all will, must enforce itself, must politically throttle its conscience and, for a while at least, consciously forsake truth and right with its own interest. But the view that one must, for the sake of power-politics, be guilty of this morbid and convulsive denial of oneself, betrays such an overweening scorn of the political ability of our people that it makes us doubt the political gift of an otherwise gifted folk. The certain Frenchman invented the bon-mot : " When a German tries to be graceful he jumps out of the window." And when he tries to be political he does the same. He thinks—unlike any other people on this earth—that he must discard his humanity. That there could be any bridge of bridge between politics and morals, between power and justice ; that they could have anything in common, he cannot believe. And this is the measure of his scorn for politics, however jealously he may lay claim to the practice of them. To him they are pure unadulterated folly. So he will go the whole hog ; equipping himself with a dehumanized "*Weltanschauung*" which, to his great disappointment, is greeted with shudders, I am afraid even with laughter, from the world. This people's busy scorn of politics is betrayed by the type of man whom it entrusts with the promulgation and practice of its unnatural point of view, in short with the guidance of its political affairs. He it is who, when Germany goes in for nationalism and power-politics, decrees that this is German and what not. I will say no more about him than just this : his appointment to office gives proof of the nation's profound pessimism on the score of politics ; adding, that the unhappy cleavage between power and the spirit which characterizes German life, the tragic estrangement between German culture and the German State has its origin here. We remember Goethe's icy isolation at the time of the *Freiheitskrieg* ; Nietzsche's despairing malediction upon the Reich ; George's bitter, inexorable " No " to the Germany of to-day, at his grave in Switzerland. We will not believe in the permanent necessity of this cleavage and estrangement. We will not cease to hope and labour for a German power, a German State, wherein the free

German spirit can joyfully play its part ; to a true " totality " of which it must belong.

Totality. There is only one, the totality of humanity, of the human. In it the politico-social field is a segment and part. The German citizen has not known that. He has thought to save his culture, his inner life, by denying politics, by " sneaking away under cover of them " as Wagner said. And from the delusion that one can be a man of culture and unpolitical much harm to Germany has ensued. But must the German always go from one extreme to the other ? Must he always, when he corrects his blunders, make them worse in the exercise of a " thoroughness " which only exhibits his awful tendency to exaggeration, his pathetic lack of human poise ? Must he now insist on " totalizing " politics and the State—which is far worse than his previous neglect of them, the first being a sin of omission, against humanity as a whole, while the second, the forcing of everything human into the political sphere, is a crime, and can only result in the committing of more and more crime ?

I think the German has a faint suspicion that he is particularly ill-suited to a totalitarian politic. It is not credible that he should care so much about it. He bears it, being now convinced that it is his lot. Dutifully he lets it be put into effect by his spokesmen, his political attorneys, those same gentry whose views about truth, freedom, and justice are what we have said. And their inhuman activities must bring them into conflict with every sort of freedom, that is clear ; but in particular the freedom of the Christian must be a thorn in their sides, and so now we see them in the act of " conquering Christendom ".

An unlovely sight. And a free German periodical is precisely the right place in which to say so. And when a state's thinkers and governors deal with truth and justice as we have seen and come by inevitable logic to blows with the whole Christian basis of our occidental civilization, then it becomes imperative to say that, whether or no these Christian foundations need revision and respiritualization in our time, certainly these people are far less than anybody else fitted for the task. Christianity cannot be conquered by falling beneath the moral level to which it has raised humanity. It can only be done by rising above it. And these impudent propagandists of its decline do not look like doing that ! " Above the high moral level of Christianity," Goethe told Eckermann, " as it radiates from the Gospels, the human spirit will scarcely rise." And now a few pseudo-revolutionary preachers, overstimulated and under-educated, think to give it the quietus. Their arrogant vanity is peculiarly untimely to-day. Christianity has always made so high and austere a demand upon the spirit of man that scarcely anybody can realize it here on earth save as a guide and corrective and spur to the conscience. But just for that reason we need it more than ever as a means of moral discipline, in these times of confusion and

emoralization, the most offensive instances of which are furnished by those who think to "conquer" it. For whenever we are concerned with values and their defence, with the preservation of a universally applicable human standard, then we must stand, firmly and in freedom, upon the human culture of occidental Christianity.

I have spoken of a new human and religious feeling which to-day is springing out of the depths of suffering; and I devoutly believe that a religious element will always be found in every really profound preoccupation with the problem of humanity. I do not mean that humanity lays claim to being a religion in that it deifies man. How little ground it would have for the claim! No, humanity is religious by virtue of its awe before the mystery embodied in the human. For man is a mystery. In him nature transcends; she issues in the spiritual. There is abroad to-day a tendency, heroic or cynical as you like, to consider him pure nature. The tendency is strong, but I think it is false. Since man is—man, he is more than nature, and this more is part of his whole. He is animal with part of his being, yes; but with another part he belongs to the world of the spirit. Because he is conscious he can distinguish; as the Deity says in Genesis, he is as one of us; he knows good and evil, he possesses the Absolute. The Absolute is given to him in his thoughts of truth, freedom, and justice, and with these thoughts there is implanted the dream of redemption from the natural and the partial: the dream of perfection. That is the essentially human thing. Art knows it well; and if what people say is true and there is affinity between art and religion, it consists in this urge for perfection.

What religion and metaphysics call redemption lies not here but in the hereafter. That craving for the supernal, however, need not prejudice us in our will to strive towards an earthly state which, while not offending the reason, does reduce to a possible, humanly tolerable minimum the inevitable gulf between spirit and reality, between life and conscience. Socialists? We are. Not necessarily because we swear by the Marxist philosophy. It is not quite in my line to envisage the spiritual as the "ideological superstructure" or to see the creative fundamental fact of life in the light of economic class-conceptions, no matter how much historical truth may lie in these. The works of culture and the spirit, in my view, belong to no class, to the scientific as little as to the intellectual or artistic. I still must see, in the great discoveries and cognitions of science, the achievements of a Newton or an Einstein; in all revolutionizing technical inventions and most of all in the creative power of philosophy and art, free achievements of the human spirit which then inevitably bring about an emancipation, a liberation from all origins and classes. The great artists and thinkers have always been, in a sense, prodigal sons of their class; their natures are by no means comprehended within the limits of Marxist doctrine. Consider Goethe, the patrician son of Frankfort, or Nietzsche, the descendant of Protestant

pastors : the minds of these two men took such flights that contemplating them we are loath to agree that such triumphs or such tragedies of destiny can have aught to do with their class. The free and bold thought, the consciousness, the cognition, are human values ; they do not spring from class conditions, of that I am convinced.

And still, even in this conviction one can be a socialist ; provided, that is, one links with it another and broader conviction : that in our time the man of culture is in a false position, he is denying life, if he arrogantly looks down upon the politico-social sphere or ranks it lower than the world of the inner life, metaphysics and religion. To compare the values of these two worlds, to confront socialism with metaphysics and represent the former as unholy, impious, anti-cultural, as bald, materialistic eudaemonism, is not permissible to-day. In a world so anti-Godly, so lost to reason as ours is now, a world of such morbid antagonism between the intellectual stage we have reached and the possibilities still existing in the actual, we may not set up the metaphysical, the inward religious life, as against the will to the better and more tolerable and call its values superior. Once again : the politico-social is part of the human. The human embraces both the inner and the outer world ; and it is therefore most fitting that precisely the artist should protest, when attempts to humanize and spiritualize the politico-social world are met with the reproach that such materialism is unworthy of him.

That is a childish bogey—and a betrayal to boot. Under the pretence of idealism, in the name of the inward life, the humanly decent is set at naught. Yet "materialism" can show more spiritual, more idealistic and religious traits than can any sentimental contempt for the material. For it need not imply an exhaustion in the material ; rather it can mean the artist will to permeate the material with the human. Remember that cry of the great individualist, Nietzsche, that thoroughly socialist cry : "To offend against the earth," he said, "is now the most frightful thing of all. I conjure you, my brothers, remain true to the earth ! Do not bury your head in the sand of heavenly things, but carry in the open a head of this earth, giving meaning to the earth ! . . . May your open-hearted love and knowledge serve the meaning of the earth ! Virtue is fled from the earth, help to bring it back—yes, back to love and life ; that it may give the earth a meaning, a human meaning ! " There we have the materialism of the spirit, the return of the religious man to the earth which represents to us the cosmic. And socialism is nothing other than the duty-prompted resolve not to hide our heads in the sands of metaphysics, in face of the most urgent material demands of the collective social life. Rather let us range ourselves at the side of those who would give meaning, a human meaning, to the earth.

I have stated it—our programme—in the form of a profession which necessarily has a personal cast. Will it for that reason seem too

individual, too idiosyncratic, to serve as the programme of a periodical—in other words of an intellectual enterprise by its nature social? But the personal need not be the isolatedly wrong-headed; it may have sympathetic contacts with the general, with the thought and activity of its time. I have no fear that many people, in many countries—the best and best-disposed throughout the world—will fail to find themselves united upon a programme such as I have tried to outline. We are not so pessimistic, nor so conceited, as to imagine ourselves isolated or out of tune with the time. On the contrary, we think the time is ripe, the hour favourable and well-chosen for the enterprise. The craving for human decency, for freedom, reason, and justice, for measure and value, is not one to be underestimated to-day. Especially, if I mistake not, has it waxed great in the country which speaks our language; I do not deny that this is not a matter of the least, perhaps it is even of the greatest concern to us, that we should have the confidence of those in Germany who wish for better things. It is the matter lying closest to our hearts, that we may be able to help on the state of things which one happy day must come to pass in place of the present. If we fail, we shall blame our own insufficiency, not the fortuitous drawback of our own proscription, which should certainly be powerless to prevent our words from reaching the ears open to receive them.

No, the inner circumstances are not unfavourable to an undertaking like ours—nor, even to-day, are the outward ones. The first stupefaction, bewilderment, paralysis of European democracy at the shameless assault of pseudo-revolutionary forces is a thing of the past; that which deserves the name of Europe, that which a stupid terrorist propaganda has tried to shriek out of existence by calling it obsolete and decaying; all that is gaining strength, poise, and consciousness of power from day to day. And on the other side: the crude and childish gesturings and posturings of those who thought to triumph over Europe by dint of crude and diabolic methods, are losing in convincingness, their whole preposterous futurist propaganda looks more and more ridiculous as time goes on. Any unprejudiced observer can see that things are not going well with the dictatorship, that it is already fundamentally discredited, and that even before it is in practice reduced *ad absurdum* we shall see youth abandon it. The beguiling witchery of that entirely depressive ideology which is called fascism was strong for a while, it is now much weaker. Fascism is going out of fashion as a mode of thought. All the charm of novelty, hope for the future, all the appeal of a fresh and joyful campaign of the spirit is on the side of humanity and freedom; enlisted for a new, perfected humanity to be fought for, achieved, remodelled, reshaped; for a truth-loving devotion to mankind. Such an endeavour must be as strong in preserving as in renewing and changing, as strong in loyalty as in liberty; it can then, we hope and believe, become the living air of the Europe of to-morrow.



Our paper puts itself at the service of this honourable endeavour. It needs the help of all the forces, both of the old and the young, which concern themselves for the destiny of mankind, for the destiny of Europe and Germany in Europe, and for the sake of their honourable concern are ready to set aside considerations of person, party, and rank, to aid in the common task. Our paper needs the loyalty and confidence of readers and friends who are ready to support us on our way for the sake of the greatness of our goal. It needs the whole freedom of the Word—a freedom which has become a rare possession on this continent. Polemic, indeed, is not our first concern; our task is rather the constructive one of seeing and working out what is to be done and striven after. Disputation, opposition, these are a detail and side issue—though every sculptor knows that the chisel must do its work if the statue is to be good. “I rejoice,” said Goethe, “to feel that there are things which I hate. Nothing is deadlier for the spirit than to find that things are good as they are; that is the destruction of all true feeling.” Destructive, indeed, would it be to-day to find that things are good as they are! So let us not give up our hatred of what is bad. There shall be no criticism for criticism’s sake, nor for any rationalizing selfish ends, but solely in the service of spiritual, intellectual, and moral endeavour—and to the furtherance of measure and value therein. But to this end we must remain free.

We have our colleagues, our like-minded friends in every country and continent—that we know. If we raise our standard on a German platform, we do so to make a rallying-place for the German spirit: that spirit which, so inalienably human, so inalienably European, is to-day so belied by its self-appointed spokesmen. Here it may freely and frankly work in the sense of its real traditions and find self-expression in co-operating with its brothers of other nations.

And so may our work speak for us.

*(Translated by H. T. Lowe Porter.)*



# THE EVE OF A UNITED CULTURAL FRONT IN CHINA

By YAO HSIN-NUNG

“ Every Chinese should stand unconditionally for the anti-Japanese united front.”—LU HSÜN.<sup>1</sup>

THIS STATEMENT WAS made by my late friend in the summer of 1936 when heated arguments were being exchanged between two rival groups of Chinese writers, each upholding its own slogan for a united front. Though the dispute was finally drowned in the nation-wide lament over Lu Hsün's death in October of the same year, the long-awaited cultural anti-Japanese united front was still looming on the horizon.

The dissension, however, was not actually answerable for the snail-pace of the movement, for there was an impervious barricade lying in its way. At the point of the Japanese bayonet, the Chinese Government had to muzzle the people's voice against their aggressive neighbour. A magazine was banned and its editor thrown into gaol at the demand of the Japanese on the ground of an alleged “insulting” reference to the Japanese throne. For similar reasons, many other periodicals incurred the same fate, even in the absence of a Japanese protest. The situation turned from bad to worse when, in November, the Nanking Government suppressed the National Salvation Movement and put seven of its leaders under arrest. Under such circumstances, it is only too clear, a cultural united front against Japanese aggression was anything but feasible.

Then came the historic *Sian coup d'état*<sup>2</sup> in December, when Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek was detained by the mutinous armies under the command of Marshal Chang Hsueh-liang and General Yang Hu-ch'eng. After the Generalissimo's return to Nanking, it was understood that a radical change of the Government's policy was to take place in favour of a national united front. But the process was so slow and mystifyingly enshrouded in clouds that for months on end there was practically no distinct improvement in the general situation.

At last in May this year, an excellent opportunity came to hand. A Japanese anti-Chinese propaganda film *The New Earth* was shown in the International Settlement of Shanghai. The Settlement authorities, who had most ruthlessly suppressed Chinese songs, plays, and motion pictures that betrayed the slightest anti-Japanese feeling, despatched

<sup>1</sup> Popularly known as “The Gorki of China”, he was the greatest contemporary Chinese writer.

<sup>2</sup> A full account of the incident is given in *Sian, A Coup d'État* by Generalissimo and Mme. Chiang Kai-shek and in Part 12 of Edgar Snow's *Red Star over China*.

a squad of armed foreign constables and detectives to protect the Japanese cinema theatre from a hypothetical mob attack. This fanned the flame of Chinese indignation, and a murmur of anger was heard from various quarters denouncing the injustice of the Shanghai Municipal Council. An opportune time for the formation of a cultural united front !

It was three o'clock on a humid May morning. In a suite in a Shanghai Chinese hotel, a meeting of the League of Dramatic Groups was still going on. After long hours of discussion, fatigue and sleeplessness had begun to dim the eyes of the seven delegates present, including myself, when I brought up the question of *The New Earth*.

The very mention of that insulting film worked upon my drowsing colleagues like magic. In the twinkling of an eye, their faces beamed with fresh vigour and an animated discussion ensued. A plan was drawn up with a view to bringing about a cultural united front against Japanese aggression under the cover of a movement for the abrogation of the International Settlement authorities' right to censor Chinese plays, songs, and films. The first step to be taken was the immediate issuing of a manifesto by all the prominent personages in the fields of drama and cinema—to fire the first shot, so to speak. There was no time to lose. While the other delegates were ransacking their brains for the names of their friends and colleagues, I snatched a Chinese brush to draft the manifesto. Towards dawn, we had a list of three hundred and seventy six important names arranged in proper order and the manifesto was in its final shape. Hundreds of duplicate copies made in the same morning were distributed to various Chinese cultural institutions and newspapers which promptly published the full text of the manifesto and the list of signatories with vindicating editorial commentaries.

The reverberation of "the first shot" was instantly echoed by a volley of protests from Chinese authors, artists, and other groups. To strike while the iron is hot, the original promoters of the movement invited many important cultural workers to a tea party, at which I proposed a united front to be formed by all cultural groups irrespective of partisan differences. This was met with a unanimous approval and a preliminary meeting of more than twenty influential organizations was called shortly afterwards.

In July, the united front finally came into shape under the pleonastic title of "The League of Shanghai Cultural Groups for the Abrogation of the International Settlement Authorities' Right to Censor Chinese Plays, Songs, and Motion Pictures", to avoid provoking a Japanese protest to the Chinese Government. But that became quite unnecessary when the Lukouchiao Incident broke out on 8th July.

The next day, at a dinner meeting of two hundred prominent leaders in various fields of Chinese culture, a proposal was made and unanimously

passed to the effect of forming a still larger organization in defence of China against Japanese aggression. There was no longer any need of a "smoke-screen", for the time had come for the whole nation openly to put up an armed resistance. Towards the end of July, the League was merged into the new organization, which was called "All-China League of Cultural Groups for National Salvation".

The cultural united front against Japanese aggression has thus come into being. It is a rock-like federation of all the cultural forces in China, which for the first time in Chinese history have pulled together for the common cause of defending their territorial and cultural integrity. In their manifesto, they have declared : " The greatest crisis has come. But we are not afraid. Because China to-day is no longer the China of yesterday, and because China is now a unified China, a solid union of her four hundred and fifty millions ! "

# THE PHASES OF THE ENGLISH DOG

By WILLIAM EMPSON

(PART I)

FROM THE SIXTEENTH to the eighteenth centuries a number of English words, arch, rogue, fool, honest, dog, and so forth, went through a cycle of curious slang or "emotive" uses that invoke patronage, irony, and sympathy, and though we still give them slang uses we keep on the whole to the last stage of the cycle. It seems to me important, as a matter of history, to understand how the cycle went, because a man tends finally to make up his mind, in a practical matter, much more in terms of these vague rich intimate words than in the clear words of his official language. Also they are interesting words for linguistic theory or plain dictionary-making, because some of their uses get a strong "period" feeling, a thing it is often essential to understand if you are to get the point of a piece of writing, and yet a thing it is difficult to list even for a dictionary on the grandest scale. One is in doubt how far the period feeling was genuinely put into the word, as its meaning in this special use, how far we imagine it there by association whereas during the period the feeling was simply everywhere—it comes out for us in this word only through a rival use that makes it evident. So that once you let yourself "read things into" these words they seem to mean a great deal; indeed absurdly too much, except that this gives you a handy way of summing up part of the thought of the period, and an insight into the way that this part came to seem obviously true because always suggested by language. Also I think that this family of words carried an interesting and controversial part. It is a commonplace that the formulae of a religion like Christianity or Buddhism may be interpreted in many ways, some exalted, some merely civilizing, some definitely harmful, and that when actively at work in a society they form a kind of shrubbery of smaller ideas, which may be the most important part of their influence, yet which also may be a half-conscious protest against the formulae, a means of keeping them at bay. There is a main puzzle for the linguist about how much is "in" a word and how much in the general purpose of those who use it, but it is this shrubbery, a social and not very conscious matter, sometimes in conflict with conscious opinion, that one would expect to find only able to survive because somehow inherent in their words. This may be an important matter for a society, because its accepted official beliefs may be things that would be fatal unless in some degree kept at bay. Chat about rogues and other Rabelaisian figures tends to be cosy from a safe distance, and I am not trying to say that the exponents of the hearty uses of these words were nice people; they

may have been of great value to our society but very nasty. The web of European civilization seems to have been slung between the ideas of Christianity and those of a half-secret rival, centring, perhaps (if you made it a system) round honour ; one that stresses pride rather than humility, self-realization rather than self-denial, caste rather than either the communion of saints or the individual soul ; while the words I want to look at here, whether in their hearty or their patronizing versions, come somewhat between the two, for they were used both to soften the assertion of class and to build a defence against Puritanism.

*Rogue* and *arch* have I suppose had no literary triumphs, and can be used quickly to show the background from which this family of slang arose. *Arch* has degenerated into facetiousness more completely, but appeared in the sixteenth century with the same aura of romantic villainy, and the same mystery about its birth, as the less temporary *rogue*. Skeat suggested and then denied that it was connected with a Saxon root "arch-" for "low and thieving" and got its character from the clash between this and the Greek "arch" for "old and ruling" ; there is at any rate an irony in its first conception, from the contrast between the accepted versions of *arch*-, e.g. archbishop and the arch rogue ; indeed, only the weight acquired by the ironical contrast explains why "arch" as *chief* was not used more generally. I suspect that many uses also draw on the Latin *arch* and the curved bow of the archer, suggesting arched eyes of pretended inquiry, the back arched in mock dignity, curled separated fingers, or muscles stiffened in a moment of social tension. Thus the word goes with an unwilling admiration both for the rogue's ability and for a certain comic force in him which makes moral condemnation seem irrelevant ; there is already a suggestion of the clown. This softened very little while changing its milieu at the Restoration :—

Last night I supped at Lord R.'s with a select party · on such occasions he is not ambitious of shining : he is rather pleasant than arch · he is comparatively reserved. . .

Rochester when "arch", one would suppose, had not the coyness suggested by the modern use ; the word means more nearly "outrageous", mainly in the way he "rallied" people. Playful uses may be found earlier but as a special treatment of a word in itself insulting. With the Augustans the word becomes somewhat fatuous because always playful, and the "arch rogue" descends to asking the innocently piercing question which in the nineteenth century would be asked by a child.

*Rogue* is a word of darker origin which appeared suddenly in the sixteenth century and rose almost at once from slang to the statute book. It was needed because of a great and dangerous increase of vagabondage, due to the failure of monastery charity, the supplanting of small farmers by great newly-rich landowners, the change from

plough to sheep, and so forth ; thus it stood for a class regarded with fear as well as horror and yet with a sort of sympathy because their condition was not their fault. The sympathy got very little rational expression, and is mixed up with the sneaking sympathy of mankind for the successful criminal, also with the Noble Savage feeling, but it gives a clear historical reason for the mixed nature of the word. Of the many suggested derivations, which I cannot criticize, a few are worth quoting for their inherent interest. Ben Jonson fancied it was derived from "erro". Two derivations from *rogo*, through the ideas "begging" and "arrogant", make a neat clash ; an obscure English *rug* "pull or catch", hence later a cheap woollen cloth, hence Shakespeare's "water-rugs", a shaggy breed of dog, takes us to the dog idea ; the verb *rag* "to tear" maintained a long life in dialect as "scold" before its nineteenth century emergence into upper-class slang ; and there was a word *roger* for "a wandering beggar who pretended to be from a university", which has probably some real connection. The sound effect is likely to have been important in getting the word accepted (whatever the source it must have been unknown to most accepters) ; it clashes "roam" with the final "g" of "dog", a sound at the back of the throat which suggests either outcasting and contempt or a pointing at one's inner man. It is more definite to look at an early account of them : Harman's *Caveat for Common Cursitors* (1566). They come only fourth in the hierarchy of vagabonds, so it was never the extreme word for a desperate character.

A rogue is neither so stout nor so hardy as the upright man. Many of them will go faintly and piteously when they see, either meet any person . . . halting though they need not, requiring alms of such as they meet. . . . But you may easily perceive by their colour that they carry both health and hypocrisy about them.

The story illustrating their habits makes them rob a parson of four marks and extract a promise that he shall drink "twelve pence for our sakes to-morrow at the alehouse". The good wife says "they be merry knaves. I warrant they mean to buy no land with your money". A subdivision of the class is viewed more gravely.

A Wild Rogue is he that is born a rogue. He is more subtle and more given by nature to all kind of knavery than the other, as beastly begotten in barn or bushes, and from his infancy traded up in treachery . . . when they meet in a barn at night, every one getteth a mate to lie withal. . . . Then, when the day doth appear, he rouses him up, and *shakes his ears*, and away wandering where he may get aught to the hurt of others

It is the latent comparison with dogs which is so powerful here ; one is forced to suspend the horror so fully expressed in the rest of the paragraph ; to be delighted that such independent creatures can be so gay and strong. The genuineness of the effect depends on its being incidental ; you must feel in real danger from robbers and anxious to get them cleaned up. "Few venture to go alone in the country," said an Italian visiting England, "excepting in the middle of the day,

and fewer still in the towns at night, and least of all in London." In 1589, just after the Armada and Tamburlane, "a band of about five hundred" disbanded soldiers, back from Drake's expedition to Portugal, "threatened to loot Bartholomew Fair. Martial Law was proclaimed. Two thousand City militiamen turned out . . . to scatter a horde that was menacing the capital. . . . It was at least six months before the panic abated" (*Elizabethan Underworld*. Introduction, p. xv). One needs to remember this sort of thing before treating as mere gaiety the hearty tone about rogues, or about Dogberry's incompetence at catching them; it is trench humour, like the jokes on venereal disease.

I should like to put here a verse from Luke Hutton's *Black Dog of Newgate* (1596) to show the solidity of feeling which might appear behind the rogue business, and that it was not only written up by literary fanciers (Hutton seems to be accepted as genuine). While starving in Newgate this highwayman hears the voice of the prisoner chained to the outside wall, who begged food there not only for himself but for all his fellows.

Woe's me, thought I, for thee so bound in chains.  
 Woe's me for them thou begs for to sustain.  
 Woe's me for all who's want all woes contains  
 Woe's me for me that in thy woes complain.

The beggar who speaks for the others takes on the functions of Christ, and seems to include the others in himself. A queer suggestion of mutuality, not merely that we are in the same boat but that you could say about me what I say about you, clings to the words I want to examine, and finds a direct and splendid expression here.

To find what became of this sentiment in the eighteenth century one had best avoid finished and artificial works like the *Beggars' Opera*, but I think so sensible a man as Fielding would have sympathized with Horace Walpole's affectations on the subject. It made life "very Gothick" to have the highwaymen still so powerful; "so that one cannot travel, even at noon, without arming oneself as if for a battle. To such a perfection have all the arts been brought." Walpole plays this game with all the cards in his hand; he is an aristocrat because he is a hereditary Whig and revolter against tyranny: at one end of the thing, he knows that Shakespeare was a rogue and vagabond in law; at another, so was Sir Robert Walpole in the *Beggars' Opera*. It is rather like Queen Victoria's claim to be a Jacobite, but also a little like what Jefferson meant when he said he hoped a truly democratic America "would never go ten years without some sort of revolution". The main point, of course, is that by Walpole's time one was much safer; the thing has become playful; even the realistic and seriously humane attitude of Fielding does not suggest that the rogues are many and dangerous enough to excite trench humour.

With this goes the emergence of "you (gay, young) dog" beside

"you rogue", and both terms may now be applied to respectable characters. The humour of mutuality in the word shifts from the good citizen's feeling about the vagabond to a man's feeling about those in his own set. But I have missed out a stage in which this shift was forced through. The Restoration aristocrat, or rather the kind who affected language through fashionable slang (and in a less degree the genteel wit of the other Charles's days, shadowed by the same threat from the forces of Puritanism), combined pride in a display of rakishness with a queer sort of political scepticism, quite compatible with being a Tory. It was easy for him to use "rogue" in the old sense about a friend. This would imply that the friend was out-and-out, fit for power, and yet that he had a reckless courage felt to be "generous" (a key notion for the words) more because it meant throwing his life away than because he or anyone was helped by it; that he had accepted a sort of social outlawry by becoming an end in himself. When Steele and Addison set out to make respectability fashionable they did not attack (or directly admit) this feeling in the words—it was part of the accepted social tone that they meant to build upon—but perpetually clashed against it the older feeling that such a man can be patronized; and they had considerable success in fixing the mixture. It is easy to write absurdly, and hard to know one's way, about this "gay dog" business. The flippant Etherege, who started the Restoration comic tradition, thought drunkenness an unforgivable fault in a young man, and approved rather solemnly of liaisons in high society because that was the only way to make it go in for intelligent conversation; in his indignation with the society that was so shocked by him when he was ambassador at Ratisbon he writes more like Matthew Arnold than a "rogue". Whereas Rochester, who really had the touch of suicide that the gay tone pretends, who was perhaps tricked into the effect of suicide by a belief that it was fashionable, hardly ever uses such words, and in his best work, which is his most desperate, rises outside their tone altogether. The hearty use of "good fellow" dates back at least to Chaucer (where it describes the kind of man to whom the Sumnour would lend his concubine), and there were plenty of people under Victoria inventing slang phrases of this sort, but there was not a general political revolt against Puritanism to make it catch on. The point for the linguist is not that the Restoration gentry were unusually roguish, but that during the Restoration a fairly permanent way of feeling had enough influence to affect certain words.

"Dog" is an important one. The word plays an unusual trick in first getting its hearty feeling in one or two special phrases, which seem already to depend upon a feeling about dogs denied in other uses of the word. Before the Restoration the dog of metaphor, by and large, is snarling, a sycophant, an underdog, loose in sex and attracted by filth, cruel if it dare; "love me, love my dog" means "love the meanest thing about me". There is the Biblical dog, a pariah, living



on crumbs and Jezebel as they drop ("a dog's chance"—he is dependent on human society and yet friendless in it); also the dog-faced Thersites of Homer, a mean and envious mocker (staying in the manger, barking at the moon). Shylock is eminently a dog of this sort and often called so; a man so placed can hardly be expected not to pervert justice, though this is a warning for you, not an excuse for him. It is not clear how far this feeling would apply to actual dogs; they do not get the full weight of it, but the change in a stock proverb seems to show that the earlier feeling was that they deserve pity as being normally (yet therefore rightly) ill-treated. "As good a deed as to help a dog over a stile," 1546, an act of supererogatory and unconventional mercy; whereas the version of 1638, "help a lame dog over a stile," puts in the adjective to make an otherwise natural action pathetic, and is a direct metaphor for helping a man. It is clear anyway that very mixed feelings are there to be drawn upon.

The derivation of the word is not known, and it seems peculiar to this island. But something can be said about the effect of the sound, which makes it particularly ready to carry a duality of feeling. (In discussing sound like this, one is concerned with what *can* be felt in the sound in special uses, not with a thing that forces itself on your attention all the time.) Compare the opposite sound *God*, which begins at the back of your throat, a profound sound, with which you are intimately connected ("ich"), and then stretches right across to a point above the teeth, from back to front, from low to high, with a maximum of extension and exultation. "D" does not stop the movement as "b" would by closing your lips, so that the idea can shoot upwards straight out of you. The suggestion of retching in the "g" ("gob") is absorbed by this, and an effect of disgust appears only in swearing, for which the word is well suited. In "dog" you do not simply do this backwards; both consonants have to be pronounced forwards though the vowel goes back, and the effect can hint at a change of mind. The "do" sound is all in the front, connected with an external object; it moves the tongue out and down with an effect of giving (as in the Aryan root) or of ejecting something from the front of the mouth. Then (with a sudden movement of affection, or a discovery of the truth, or a final anathema) the word reaches across to something deep, personal to you, and despised.

Orion makes a fine discourse on dogs in *Summer's Last Will and Testament*, which it seems he has taken from Sextus Empiricus's *Pyrrhoniae Hypotyposes*; it shows the kind of thing you could feel about actual dogs, as apart from metaphorical ones, without coming very close to them. Being a hunter, he is concerned with the dog's natural wisdom, faithfulness, and so forth; one might connect Shakespeare's view of dogs with his not coming from a hunting class and his evident sympathy in *Lucrece* for the hare.

The more obvious Elizabethan view, the idea of the dog as a cynic (which Nash throws in to his set of claims), seems to be in part a learned innovation. Few people nowadays observe their dogs to grin, and those who do take it as a charming smile, but the grin of dogs seems then to have been part of their reputation for satire. I take it that the medical use (1615) "Convulsions we call Cynic or dog-spasms because by the contraction of these, men are constrained to writhe and grinne like dogs," is a foreign or ancient association of ideas that still needed to be explained. The Biblical "grin like a dog and run about the city" would insist on this aspect, whatever the original meant, and Ben Jonson seems to connect this with the idea of a man "grinning in the rage of his lust". It is curious to compare Pope's version of the reminiscence from this Biblical phrase—

Nor like a puppy daggle up and down  
To fetch and carry singsong up and down

The important puppy is quite a different dog. No dog grins in Chaucer. I suspect the Elizabethan dog's grin needs a more learned treatment than I can give it. However, there was a more obvious element in dog behaviour that fitted the cynic, the habit of making water often and on conspicuous objects, actually (I believe) as a signal to the next comer, but mistaken by men for a signal of contempt.

This connection with cynicism is puzzling to modern sentiment, which tends rather to stress the unreasoning fidelity of the creatures, and certainly it was mixed up with other ideas. Various combinations show a feeling of low but sturdy and permanent usefulness about them—e.g., *fire-dogs*, and *dogs of iron* to support a steeple (1458); this is close to the "old dog at" feeling. Also a charming mixture of ideas seems to be at work in the word *fawn*. The N.E.D. gives this as a development of "fain" in the sense "rejoice at pleasure", and gives it a special origin through a phrase about dogs *faining* or *faining with* their tails (from 1225). The word might also make them *desire* or *welcome* what they wag their tails at, or indeed "congratulate their own tails", and the pun with "feign" would help the shift to servility; in welcoming a master with uneasy attempts to make peace they are "lying with their tails". Shakespeare had a sort of fixation of disgust between the words "spaniel" and "candy"; the dogs always appear slobbering and melting their sweets, and the cynic imagined as *dog* always at bottom wants to get on in the world he despises (Timon and Apemantus puzzle each other with this fact). The word "hypocrite" itself, indeed, seems to have been touched by the variety of *fain*. The N.E.D. rightly refuses to separate into two senses the uses for conscious and unconscious hypocrites, and ends its list with a nineteenth century statement that the two are inseparable. Seeing that the examples can hardly ever be separated it is interesting to find More giving an ambiguous explanation after his early use of the word—"Ipocrites that *fain* to have virtues that

they lack." The word being needed for purposes of insult has steadily refused to make a distinction which most of its users must have known would be charitable.

The merits of a dog in Elizabethan metaphors about men come out only in the two phrases "shaking its ears" and being "a dog at all things". The Variorum edition of *Twelfth Night* gives seven contemporary references for "Go shake thine ears" under a use of it by Maria (II, iii, 126), and calls it an expression of contempt always used with a reference to helpless asses. Actually only two of the references name an animal at all; one of these, *Julius Caesar*, IV, i, 26, names an ass, as metaphor for a laborious fool, but Shakespeare is very capable of re-applying a stock phrase, and the more obvious one names a dog. "Thou must get thee packing, thou damned dog, and go shake thine eares, for in me thou hast nought" (Stubbes, *Christall Glasse*). Of course, one could put the phrase on to any such animal, and I only need to show that it went easily on to dogs. No one could say that the ass rather than the dog was at work in my quotation from Harman, about the rogue who shook his ears and went off looking where he might do aught to the hurt of others. The phrase there has a strangely eighteenth-century feeling; it is made delightful that the rogues should be independent, and somehow encouraging that they should be like dogs. The idea behind the phrase is that the dog (for instance, in shaking the water out of its ears after being thrown into the pond) shows a cheerful stoicism based on independence and indifference to dignity. The paradox of the independence of a specially dependent creature is as clear here as in Fool.

The dog can easily be made to seem important as blowing the gaff on human nature, but only the phrase "a dog at all things" allows it a more general admiration. Nash had used "he is old dog at expounding" some years previously in a context of contempt, and this, perhaps, is the root form. Lodge uses "he is dog at recognisances and statutes" (*Wits Miserie*, rather later) in the sense of "a clever scamp". I suppose there is an additional joke when Sir Andrew Aguecheek says he is "dog at a catch", as it suggests the dog howling in sympathy while his betters sing; and there is a terrible point in the phrase when De Flores in *The Changeling* says he is "dog at a house on fire"; the lust of the underdog is witty at contriving ruin. The phrase in cases like this, though it can be hearty in a degree, starts from patronizing the "old dog" who leads the pack; it stands for the absurd but specialized powers of the country wiseacre, knowing not rationally but by the instinct of long experience. This stress on instinct could however shift over to the idea that the young aristocrat has natural good manners, so that the word was ready for the chance it took at the Restoration.

(To be continued)

# DOROTHY M. RICHARDSON

By ELLEN FITZGERALD

GEORGE SAND CALLED the novel the nineteenth-century art. Walter Scott who taught the nineteenth century to be novel-minded was sure women were better novelists than men, Henry James, the most novel-nourished of all novelists, was sure women had harmed the novel. There is irony in this judgment. In 1915, ill unto death, he may not have seen *Pointed Roofs*, the initial of a series belonging to *romans-fleuve*, a movement in the novel Henry James has no part in. It is doubtful whether he would have followed *Pilgrimage* once the pilgrim had entered Bohemia, he who loved best the Lady, and never tired of her portrait. This irony deepens as the series proceeds, for consciousness, the basic idea of the James novel, is the solvent Dorothy Richardson reserves for her central figure. It is consciousness in Miriam, and how she interprets her own awareness against the obtuseness of her world. That is the idea; her world is the picture. And Henry James' definition of a novel in idea and picture is illustrated in a disciple whose name he may not have heard. *Pilgrimage*, an idea and picture, is ten years of a young woman's life as lived in the nineteenth century, at a period now seeming long ago, preserved to us in eleven delicate but redoubtable volumes. A woman's book, a woman's point of view, all the "isms" incident to a woman's expanding life, which George Sand expressed in innumerable novels, and George Eliot intensified in a few. This novel has a humbler source than either of these, even as it has a wider reach. Charlotte Brontë hovers over the first movement, she who made the governess a lodestar to women dependent but romantic. To many this may prove a favourite phase of Miriam's life, one in accord with the English lady tradition, *Pointed Roofs* in Hanover, and the further we advance in the whole, the more this novel, appearing in 1915, reflects the restraint of art; it should have been a peace offering in a troubled time. The whole of the reaction to Germany takes a glow from this Hanover experience, deepening the further we enter different scenes. North London (*Backwater*) is, except for Julia Doyle and the Groomes, a barren interval. Suburban London in a rich family, completes a unit which Henry James would have read, and approved, even the title and its faint symbol, *Honeycomb*. A novel, as Virginia Woolf says, is difficult to read; much more difficult is it to review. The idea grows into ideas, one life expands to many lives, Miriam as governess is a familiar orientation; as dental secretary in Wimpole Street, she is centre of metier and milieu new to the novel. Mrs. Browning must now yield to mode and measure she dreamed not of. A dental novel is novel indeed. Dentists are new men to be typed and recognized. The Orly family, but Mr. Hancock is

favourite, an attractive character well presented, the whole clientele is alive. Tansley Street divides the interest with Wimpole Street. Another world this, an English *Maison Vanquer* without a Père Goriot. Instead Michael Shatov, a Russian Zionist. Miriam is more than ever governess, correcting the English of foreigners, remembering her German, her French, a vivid person disciplining all about her in pronunciation, in the ways of London, in the mysteries of being English. There are visits out of London to her friend Ilma. These are important as later events show; visits from Ilma whose husband Hypo is centre of a literary group Miriam is now part of.

After *The Tunnel*, *Interim*, *Deadlock*, *Revolving Lights* are socialism, the Fabians, and the nineteenth-century agnosticism, all now outworn but much alive in their day. Men argue those things better than women. It is the touch women give the novel that Scott admired, Maria Edgeworth and Jane Austen he thought perfect, he who knew nothing as we know now of the Lady Murasaki. It is the touches in this far-flung novel which he would have liked, not the importance of a woman, by a woman. Miriam is better when she makes pictures, poses her friends in central light and lets the dark reveal them. Sunlight or lamplight, lecture room, restaurant, or theatre, the picture is made. The novel has become a borrower of all the arts, till life is now for those who read, as well as frequent galleries. *The Trap* is especially for the eye; *Oberland* is a bit of real literature, a capture of bracing, health-giving Switzerland, *Dawn's Left Hand* and *Clear Horizon*, are the logic of a determination to try life at all cost. The end is not yet. We are far from Henry James. Will the novel itself endure this clearance? Are we ready for a song of the Open Road? This in outline is the eleven novels, twenty years in making. Not a voluminous work. When placed by the *roman-fleuve* which the French turn out, it is slight. Slight as it is, *Pilgrimage* is not easy to read. The reader must anchor where he can, build the whole from fragments dropped anywhere. Family novel it is not, though there is a family of four sisters loosely related. Topographical coherence is not to be hoped for, once Hanover is left behind. We feel our way, we are not guided. Dialogue is produced for pages, and no identity of speakers vouchsafed the reader. What is the readers' right in this? There are underlined moments in *Pilgrimage*, no action in the sense that action means to blend, fuse, and above all grow. All for periphery, no centre, Jan and Mag are no better known to us the last time they are mentioned than the first. Is a character speaking to himself, thinking out aloud, or is someone doing both for him? A scrap from a letter may be taken for a monologue. These are but a few difficulties which trip the reader. Will authors never understand that the prosperity of a book is with the reader?

What a renewal of an old calendar, what a recall is *Pilgrimage* to the '90's, and even earlier, of the nineteenth century. We who knew that

far-off time can live again when the bicycle was real recreation, when fringes hid our foreheads, and blouse and skirt agreed to be unlike. We who saw Henry Irving and Ellen Terry act, who heard Melba sing, read *Robert Elsmere*, feel again that the old time was good. Emerson was a great light ; Newman a power ; Matthew Arnold's sweetness and light a gentle gospel. The woman versus man controversy so insistent in Miriam, was an outcry in our day ; now it is no longer an issue ; the agnosticism strong in Miriam is a feeble echo. All these and more are in *Pilgrimage*, a strident book subdued by art, flooded by light as the studio understands light, but inner light that has yet to be shown. One thinks retrospectively of the first Richardson and her defeated Clarissa ; the second Richardson and her mocking Miriam. Between the two nearly two centuries of English novel writing.

## RECENT POLISH POETRY

By WATSON KIRKCONNELL

IN 1919 THE Polish state came once again into being after more than a century of political extinction; and one might almost say that the Phoenix that has thus arisen from the fires of war has come with a new song in its throat. The poetry of the New Poland is not the poetry of the Old.

The change is one which concerns the very function of poetry. During the long night from the Third Partition in 1796 to the triumphs of Piłsudski in 1919, the ghost of Poland sang loudly in the darkness, but its themes were insistently political. *Facit indignatio versus*. A long era of national martyrdom found inevitable expression in the poetry of pain and political yearning. A man who suffers from a chronic ulcer is likely to be obsessed with the ever-present reality of his own anguish; and so it was with these martyred generations of Poland. Not only did their poets—Mickiewicz, Słowacki, Krasiński, even Asnyk and Marja Konopnicka—regard themselves as the consecrated spokesmen of the Polish cause, but Poles everywhere looked to their poets as the natural leaders of their suppressed nationality. Poets tended, all too often, to be famous in proportion to their patriotic fervour. Gifted men like Fredro and Norwid (the Polish Molière and the Polish Valéry respectively) were ignominiously neglected because they did not minister to the popular demand for martyrs' food. Solemnity, sadness, and a vocal love of country were the Polish criteria of literary value.

In 1919 the Babylonian captivity under Russia, Austria, and Prussia came to an end, and the Polish state entered once more into its ancient inheritance. The subsequent eighteen years have seen it grow steadily in lusty nationhood, a population of thirty-five million people in an area considerably larger than Italy. But whereas its literature might have been expected to salute with triumph this achievement of an age-old ideal, the exultation has been relatively restrained.

One might profitably carry still further the simile of the man suffering from an ulcer. As long as his malady torments him, he can think of little else; but when, by successful treatment, he is at last cured, he proceeds to exult in the manifold and varied interests of a normal healthy man, and only occasionally gossips proudly about his "operation". In like manner, the poets of the New Poland have tended to forget the anguished constraint of political preoccupations and to venture freely out into a poetic realization of varied personality and Protean experience. The poetry of suppressed nationality, like the poetry of suppressed class-warfare, tends to lose its intense but narrow motivation and its somewhat vociferous vitality when its ends

are achieved. The newer poetry of Poland is far more varied than the old, giving lyric expression to a far wider range of individual mood—restless, anxious, confident, turbulent, above all intensely personal.

Into the New Day there survived a number of important poets of the pre-War period—Jan Kasprówicz (1860–1926), “Miriam,” i.e. Zenon Przesmycki (born 1861), Antoni Lange (1862–1929), Kazimierz Tetmajer (born 1865), and Leopold Staff (born 1878)—but of these only Staff has grown in poetic stature since the War.

Leopold Staff was only forty years of age when the Armistice was signed, but he had then been writing significant poetry for nearly two decades. He is the greatest master of the pure lyric in all Polish poetry, and is acknowledged by the chief younger poets of to-day as their “guide, philosopher, and friend”. Born in Lwów (Lemberg) and educated at the universities of Lwów and Paris, he spent long years in Italy and other congenial countries of Latin culture. In his earlier work (e.g. *Dreams of Power*, 1901) he revealed the influence of Nietzsche, some of whose writings he translated into Polish; but his mature philosophy, after running the whole gamut of change, has come close to that of Saint Francis of Assisi, with its humble piety towards life and nature. His long intellectual pilgrimage has caused his poetry to appeal to contemporaries of many different types; yet his greatness is much more in form than in thought. He does not pose as a systematic philosopher, but he is very definitely a great artist, saturated with the spirit of ancient Greek and Renaissance Italian art, especially that of his idol, Leonardo da Vinci.

His delicate and infallible sense of form, as well as his riper outlook on life, may be exemplified in the following lyric “Golden Elegy”,<sup>1</sup> “in which he makes the splendours of Poland’s autumnal forests symbolic of an ideal autumn in the life-cycle of the individual, one who has lived fully and loved greatly and dies in calm magnificence and beauty of spirit :—

#### THE GOLDEN ELEGY

Where is a golden goblet fill’d so deep  
With golden wine as thou, in hue so bold,  
O Earth, whom draughts of autumn lull to sleep  
With all thy dreaming forests changed to gold?

To bud, and bear, and, after bounteous fruit,  
To perish in surpassing pomp and splendour  
That were a fate serene and absolute!  
My soul craves that last glory of surrender!

O Earth, our mother and our kindly nurse,  
So meek in spring! But now that summer’s done,  
Thou hast become—while all else turns to worse—  
A holy, golden sister of the sun

<sup>1</sup> All translations in this article are by Watson Kirkconnell.



## RECENT POLISH POETRY

Blest be the secret powers that here beget  
 Our dark existence with its zeal for duty—  
 Sending us toil and torment, blood and sweat—  
 If life can end in such a flame of beauty !

Then let my days in their dull series die,  
 Perish my yearning heart and all its pain,  
 If in their quiet autumn elegy  
 Only blue glory and gold grace remain !

Love gives thee back the tints that in its keeping,  
 O Earth, drew power from thy mighty breast.  
 Would that our hearts were fair as thou, here sleeping,  
 Could love like thee, and turn as brave to rest ! . .

Of the younger Polish poets who have been influenced by Staff, while maintaining vividly their own several individualities, the four most important are Julian Tuwim (born 1894), Antoni Słonimski (born 1895), Kazimierz Wierzyński (born 1895), and Jan Lechoń (born 1899). They are sometimes known as the "Skamander group", from their early association with a Warszawa periodical by that name.

Tuwim, who is of Jewish stock, was born in that Polish Pittsburg, the smoky industrial town of Łódź. He has a fuller flow of poetic vitality than any of his co-evals. This vein of native inspiration has been further enriched by a profound historical study of the Polish language and by the invaluable exercise of verse translation, especially from the Russian. Dynamic as he is, however, he has thus far failed to develop any intellectual centre of gravity, but has hurried with yearning restlessness in all directions. The following poem reveals something of Tuwim's poignantly emotional quality :—

## THERE IS NO COUNTRY

There is no country whence I shall not yearn  
 In grieving anguish for the old, grey streets.  
 All cries of victory to sobbing turn,  
 And earth's wide wonder into nothing fleets.

There is no land where I have visited  
 Unhaunted by the old, grey memories  
 No matter what the highway that I tread,  
 My inner eye the same horizon sees.

Nothing can solace to my heart provide ;  
 Joyless is every vista I have scanned ;  
 Eternally above me opens wide  
 The old, grey welkin of my native land.

No travel helps, no road that I have trod,  
 Nor human crowds nor oceans bring relief ;  
 Even upon the streets I pray to God,  
 While people gaze and listen to my grief.

No help in any wealth of language lies ;  
 Nor savage hymns nor races foil despair.  
 For what it may avail, I face the skies  
 And raise anew my plain, old daily prayer.

I wail, I cry out in most desperate straits :  
 "Hearken, Jehovah, flash Thy sword to view !"  
 But yonder, in the streets, the Father waits :  
 The old, grey God my Polish boyhood knew.

Śłonimski is also of Jewish origin, and is at one with Tuwim in the violent conflicts within his own spirit—a paradoxical flux of brutality and sentimentality, of sneering rhetoric and compassionate simplicity. He was born in Warszawa, and educated in Paris as a painter ; but he has devoted himself since 1918 to journalism, poetry, and the drama.

From Kazimierz Wierzyński, who had spent several years as a soldier and a prisoner-of-war, the *New Day* evoked an ecstatic volume of poetry, *Spring and Wine*, in which the sheer joy of living found exuberant expression. To the Polish public he is best known for his volume of Pindaric poems in praise of athletic prowess, *An Olympic Laurel*, which was awarded a crown at the Olympic Games of 1928. The poet of optimistic enthusiasm soon descended, however, into a Valley of the Shadow of Death, where he walked in grim despair over the misery of which he had become suddenly aware in modern industrial Europe. Although he has since emerged from the worst shadows, he still sees all too clearly the hideousness of life's tragic waste. One of his quieter lyrics embodies an autumn mood on the Polish plains :—

#### THE FIELDS ARE BARE

The fields are bare. In silent pain,  
 The dying verdure wastes away.  
 The gusts of autumn sweep the plain ;  
 Black crows pursue, as wild as they.

Sallow as stubble-fields, the sun  
 In gathering storm-clouds hides his head ;  
 As sudden showers onward run,  
 Blind puddles on the earth are shed.

And walking through such fields as these  
 That in deserted stillness die,  
 Even a tiny mouse can please,  
 That peers from its low granary.

In art, Jan Lechoń stands at the opposite extreme from Julian Tuwim. His poetry is not water gushing warm from a rock, but rather rock itself, wrought with infinite labour into lines of delicate simplicity. His inspiration not being equal to such rigorous self-discipline, he has

published no volume of verse since 1924. His finality of expression will, however, give many of his brief lyrics a permanent place in Polish literature. He shares with other members of the Skamander group a power over vivid and original imagery. The following brief lyric is typical in form, although perhaps untypically expansive in emotional attitude :—

## PRAYER

O Sower of the eternal stars on high,  
O Lord alike of rains and burning heat,  
Stoop from Thy silent vastness, we entreat,  
And grant a draught of quiet from the sky !

Then drown us in Thy worlds of boundless light,  
Gild us like stars, dissolve us like the seas,  
Blend us with air in blue infinities,  
And tune us like an echo in the height ;

Mix us with morning, rising pale at dawn,  
And with the cloud at noon-day idly sailing ;  
Mix with night's veil across the dim earth trailing,  
That we from soul and self may be withdrawn !

The Skamander poets are only the more prominent younger figures in an age of astonishing lyric eruption. The general literary activity of the New Poland may be gauged by the fact that in 1931 there were published in Poland 11,313 different books, running to 37,142,000 copies, as well as 2,406 periodicals of various sorts and circulations. This is an output more copious than that of either France (9,800 books) or Italy (10,800 books) in the same year, and not far short of that of Great Britain (14,700 books). Of the many poets of the time, estimated at "anywhere up to ten thousand", those already mentioned are only the most prominent. One might go on to deal with the powerful proletarian verse of Władysław Broniewski and Marjan Piechal, the metaphysical meditations of Jastrun, or the psychological nuances of Miss H. Konopacka, Miss F. Kreuzewska, and Miss H. Łazowert. I shall, however, limit myself to two more names—those of Miss Kazimiera Iłakowicz and of Mrs. Marja Pawlikowska.

Miss Iłakowicz is not only the chief living woman poet of Poland, but has a distinguished record of public service as well. Born in Wilno in 1892, she studied literature at the University of Kraków and at Oxford University, England. From 1914 to 1917 she served as a Red Cross nurse in the field with the Polish Corps of the Russian Army and was decorated on three different occasions for deeds of extreme bravery under fire. With the re-emergence of the Polish state, she entered the government service, first as a Councillor in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and later (1926–1935) as private secretary to Field-Marshal Józef Piłsudski. Like Adam Mickiewicz, she reflects

affectionately in her poetry much of the landscape and folklore of her native Lithuania ; and her deep national feeling often clothes itself in sensitive love for river and meadow and forest. This national poetry and her graceful rhymes for children are possibly closer to her heart, and yet she has probably touched higher achievement in a very individual type of lyrical monologue, written in a sort of rhymed free verse and employing a vivid symbolism to express a personal mood or emotion. An example is "The River" :—

Upon my pebbles break and seethe  
 All of the sighs you breathe.  
 I am a running, liquid element—but you  
 A bank set here my waves to pen and mew.  
 You hunt across the meadows, and your arrows keen in flight  
 Slay birds upon my bosom, dear little ducks all white.  
 You hew down alders, oaks that remember centuries gone by ;  
 You loose them in my waters, that logs afar their course may ply.  
 And you come panting, dirty, and you kneel athirst  
 Above me, but I scorn your image, muddy and accurst,  
 And—when you drink me—cool and pure and light my water lingers,  
 And my soul slips, slips, slips away between your bloody fingers !

To pass from the major narrative and descriptive poetry of Miss Iłakowicz to the verses of Mrs. Pawlikowska is to pass from mural paintings to miniatures. Mrs. Pawlikowska's chief work has been done in a type of four-line epigram, comparable in brevity and method to the Japanese *hokku*. Within the limits of a single quatrain one cannot expound ; one can only hint. Her achievement lies precisely in the pungent delicacy with which she implies the circumambient human comedy and human tragedy. Or again, the shattered "Nike" of Samothrace becomes symbolic of unsatisfied love :—

## VICTORY

Thou'rt like the Parian "Victory" from Samothrace,  
 O Love of mine, unsilenced by life's harms !  
 Though slain, you run the same all-ardent race,  
 And still hold out your bleeding stumps of arms. . . .

Or another brief poem punctures with a sharp needle of matter-of-factness all romantic bubbles of conjecture regarding Hamlet's love affair :—

## OPHELIA

Ah, long in glassy water shall I lie,  
 'Mid knotted water-plants, until to me 'tis proved—  
 And I believe the verdict with a sigh—  
 That, in plain terms, I simply wasn't loved.

It is impossible in a single short article to do more than point to half a dozen of the more significant poets of contemporary Poland. However, perhaps enough has been said to indicate that poetry, and especially lyric poetry, is playing a vital part in the cultural life of this great nation of Eastern Mid-Europe, a part that is more richly varied (because less insistently political) than at any other time during Poland's four centuries of literary history.

## EGYPT, 1903

By BRYHER

## PART I. CAIRO

NOBODY EVER GETS over their first camel.

It was almost Christmas, 1903, when we landed in Alexandria. Three days had been punctuated by a stewardess bringing me greasy soup, by being wrapped in rugs and carried on deck to die, and by merciful intervals of sleep. We had boarded a French steamer at Naples, the *Equateur*, and had run immediately into a good Mediterranean storm. To be sea-sick was disquieting for a would-be cabin boy, but the seas had been high and landing I had felt even greener than I had looked.

I knew very little about Egypt. I cannot remember that I had thought about the country until I had surprised the word that autumn, recurring continually in adult conversation. I had already learned to listen but not to speak, if I wanted information. I looked up my list of Henty books instead and demanded *The Cat of Bubastes* for my next present. On the journey I had added *Egypt*, in the *Story of the Nations* series, and Baedeker. The Egyptians were grave, they loved animals, they hunted and they fished but they did not like war. Memnon from Ethiopia linked them up with Troy and of course there was Moses and the Bible.

It was more than going to a new country, I had stepped out of Europe. If only my family could be persuaded to travel far enough we should come to elephants and giraffes. I had myself become more important that very hour. Only I was worried that I did not want to eat, I still held my Jaffa orange and the countryside looked flat, familiar, even dull.

At that moment I saw a baby camel and its mother.

They were strolling very slowly along the road, roundabout beasts come to life. The baby was woolly, with lamb's curls on its flanks, both were dignified and I remembered that their hind legs could scratch their ears. What kind of grunts were camel-language? I shook with excitement and pressed my nose against the window.

Whatever happened, nobody could take from me that I had seen a camel in its native land.

Cairo thirty years ago was the myth of a child's imagination, much more exciting than any dream because it answered, where stories only suggested. I began to learn Arabic and to absorb Mohammedan culture, it was such a simple religion for the young.

We looked into cities. Streets were here to-day ; to-morrow even Ali, our dragoman, found it hard to trace them. They appeared to be alike, the direction changed, they wound over on themselves, a kind of dragon's tail that I might have drawn in sand. Sometimes I clung to the balcony rail and counted runners, the *Sais* in short white clothes and scarlet jackets, embroidered with sunflower threads, racing in front of the dogcarts and victorias, clearing the water carriers to one side, only to have them dart again between them and the horses. Or we would drive ourselves through narrow alleys, the coachman clacking his whip to announce our coming ; trotting round the corner, we were in the streets of the saddlers, it smelt of leather and Damascus ; bright red harness hung on hooks round the open shop frame and men bent over straps, hammering in brass. This was both caravan end and camel trip beginning. Saddles did not arrive suddenly on ponies as they did in England but instead, if the carriage would drive slowly enough, I could see exactly how they were made, from the stiff hides to the last ceremonious nail.

My favourite afternoons were those we spent at Hatoun's, then a trader's palace and not a tourist store. I used to wander away, while my parents looked at rugs, to watch a boy no bigger, though older than myself, hand his father little cubes of ivory and ebony while cross-legged men in the corner hammered out metal sheets.

They were kind to me, was it because I asked the Arabic names ? The merchants themselves taught me how to bargain in the Eastern way, which is (or should I write, was) an art. It was abstract, to be played as chess or as some Chinese game, strictly, with concentration. First I must not *want* the article for which I bid. To want was to lose. (This proved too difficult for nine but I compromised by choosing always something for a friend !) I picked up a little bowl and asked the price, this was the classic beginning. Hearing the sum, I laughed, asked it again, incredulously, a guinea, why it was not worth a farthing ! We chatted about Persian tea, of how carpets were folded, they gave me silk to feel, heavy and so like the thickness of a summer rose that I would never call it "white", for that was snow or the undercurl of surf. I looked up, saw a matchlock on the wall, was it from Afghanistan perhaps or some half Indian hill, and guessed its cost. They brought me a thick coffee in a tiny cup and Turkish delight in cubes the colour of a dragoman's robe.

We talked. Presently I fingered the bowl as if by chance and suggested a couple of shillings, by way of making them a gift. This was the moment when the game began. They taught me to feel across with my mind to theirs, while my face showed neither enthusiasm or interest, till I touched thought with thought, as actually as my hand slid along the turquoise sword hilt that I hoped my father would buy. There was always one instant, when idly, without its seeming to matter, the

lips must offer the piastre more : it is common enough in the East and easy to learn with the unstiffened mind of a child. It seldom happens in the West or rather people are unconscious of it. If they meet it, they call it mystery but it is merely a flexibility of concentration, of indirect, rather than direct, action.

Sometimes I won, sometimes I lost. They lectured me, shaking their heads, not letting me have the bowl, if I were too eager or let the right instant slip. Sometimes they praised me, adding a little present, telling my father that I should remain in Egypt, that I might become learned. I am angry always since at any cheating practices of extortionate sellers. A merchant is a variant of a scribe, to whom the exploitation of the ignorant is as distasteful as the falsification of a record : it is permissible only to scheme and parry with equals.

First impressions mingle with those of the following year, when we returned to Egypt again for several months. It proved such a constant background in development that it is hard to detach isolated incidents from something that was a whole. As an American told us, her nephew had learned more in one trip up the Nile, than in ten years at school.

By some stroke of good fortune, we were able to attend a service of the " dancing dervishes ". I have heard since that it was the last year that non-Moslems were allowed to witness the real ceremony. Tourists saw dervishes afterwards, but by arrangement, not those of the high order to which we were admitted. We stood, perhaps twenty of us, in darkness behind a rope. Ali had warned us to be silent, but I did not need his whisper to recognize the descendant of the Prophet, having read about his green turban in the guide book. I do not know why we had been permitted to come, for it was one of the most solemnly religious services that I have ever witnessed and I had had even then experiences of diverse churches.

Their leader read the Koran or some prayers, occasionally they answered him. The hall was very high, it was cool and large. It was like the night, still over the roof tops. Quietly, the first sail fluttering to a mast, a dervish began to dance, the white stuff moving until another joined him and another, in a grave circular dance.

I thought of Ramadan and wished I could keep the fast, to show that I was as enduring as an Arab. To ride, to shelter the traveller, to put sword and horse or better, one's racing camel, before one's self, this was less a law than the child's own meaning of adventure. It would have been unnatural for me then to have seen the other side, the intolerance, negation of women, the locked unexpanding studies. I watched the skirts and the thin, absorbed faces of the men, too near a kind of trance or ecstasy myself to be surprised at seeing it in others.

Before the climax of the dance, we, as unbelievers, were hurried quietly away.



## PART II. THEBES

We stayed in Luxor at a bungalow adjoining what is now the old hotel. It stood in a garden of palms, roses, and bougainvillia. Native servants darted with trays along the neat, gravel paths, in white robes with scarlet sashes and slippers. We were away from the European fashions of Cairo and if not hunters, at least we boasted sun-helmets. The timorous wore tents, gigantic white umbrellas lined with winter-green, the brave merely swished an ivory-handled fly whisk.

At sunset everybody strolled to the road along the river, where the Cook's steamers anchored. Sometimes a solitary dahabiyeh would moor and a discreet whisper pass, in primitive radio, "do you know who is on board?" According to the code of that season such travel was ostentatious, our humbler multitude delighted in exaggerated stories of its difficulties. "I should be afraid, dear," spotted muslin would shiver, "to go to sleep with a native crew so near me and no policeman." A parasol would shift for her companion to add, "they say they were caught two days in a sandstorm, *miles from a hotel.*"

There were always arguments. "Personally, I prefer the Ramasseum." That was sure to be a stout lady in a starched shirt waist. "Wait till you see Karnak by moonlight," she would be romantic and afraid of flies. People grouped and quarrelled over the respective temples until a small boy thrust out a black paw full of imitation scarabs, or a merchant strolled up with carpets, of Birmingham make, guaranteed pure Syrian. There were the usual shops full of necklaces, ostrich feathers, and brass. We met friends, discussed the badness of the food, took our films to be developed, and agreed that Egypt was wonderful.

I remember only of the Luxor temples that there were great broken pillars standing in a golden magnificence beside the Nile. It was not so easy then to visit the Tombs of the Kings. The Theban hills were still the sleepy wheat of after dawn when we got into a rowing boat, identical with the models on the museum shelves. We sat under where the awning would have been at noon and our rowers pulled out, singing as their oars moved, ending stroke and song sharply, feeling the water, then repeating stanza and movement again.

We disembarked half way across to walk over a white spit of sand. I seem to remember kingfishers; their wings matched the blue that the Egyptians used in painting water flowers. There were certainly hoopoes, pricking the sand, with arrogant crests, black feathers and white. There was another boat, another row, until we reached the western bank and our waiting donkeys in a little under an hour.

The ride was cool at first, we trotted round villages shaded by tall palms. There were squares of sugar cane and leaves of maize, the green of the evening river. We charged down a dyke and up the other side with boys chattering and the animals tugging at the reins. We had

timed our trip to begin, when the steamer tourists with their dust were a mile or more in advance.

I led, always. This was understood for the peace of the caravan, sometimes my father would catch up to me, sometimes he rode beside my mother and Ali. There were boys behind, with the camera, an umbrella, and our lunch.

The track turned abruptly between receding cliffs whose shadows were a mockery of coolness. The sand everywhere was the same fire-hot stickiness, sucking at hooves, until we moved forward at a walk, the boys being too weary and road beaten to shout. Something behind the hills seemed to be watching, yet there was no trace of life. There was danger in the indifferent, terrifying desolation.

We came presently to a cave or tomb a little way from the road, where a man in a white sun-helmet was sifting some objects carefully. He was an Austrian excavator, Ali whispered. I do not remember if he called or if we simply rode up, but it was pleasant in the shade and he spoke to us about his work. I think that I recognized a cartouche though actually he was in search of flints.

The Austrian was kind. He explained signs to me and let me show him what I knew. My family was assured that if I could have a daily lesson, I would read hieroglyphics by the end of the winter. I formed at once a high opinion of the wisdom and generosity of archæologists, mature experience was dismally to demolish. Later encounters proved extremely depressing, in particular with an English group where everyone specialized in prehistoric pottery and talked only of how to steal sites from their American colleagues. They appeared to be intellectual gangsters, without real interest in history and shocked that one should hope for an ostrakon with a poem. Fortunately this first meeting was with a scholar; when I trotted off, whisking flies from the donkey's neck, I wondered if digging might not be a substitute for driving a chariot. A few moments afterwards we came to the first Tombs.

The burial chambers merge into a general memory. We walked down steps, along corridors, into halls. It was difficult to see at first, coming from bright sunlight into intense darkness, then electric lights flashed on to show the paintings on each side. Once bats flew to the ceiling as we entered and the smell of the air drove us as quickly out again.

I took to Egyptian religion like a duck to water. It was so easy to understand. I had never been afraid of dying, at nine it seldom has a personal significance. Warriors fought, then, like Achilles, they died. Instead of a cold day of judgment and punishment for sins I did not understand, here were Egyptians sailing with Osiris or braving monsters in a desert, like the valley through which we had just passed. There were aspects of the mysteries that were terrible, to thirst, to miss the way, to hear the hyenas when the spears were lost. Yet

Thoth waited with his ape, the souls were weighed against truth, if they had stolen or killed or boasted or robbed the unfortunate, a crocodile was ready to devour them; if they were forgiving and wise, they remembered the sacred words and came to the fields where the sun shone, the twelve hours it did not lighten the earth, to fish and reap and dream among the lotus flowers and the reeds. It was so simple and so much the twin of life; there were none of the occasional troubling dangers other philosophies threatened with their introverted words.

I had one difficulty. I could not comprehend the sacred beetle. I watched them in the crevices of walls, saw them as scarabs everywhere, but they puzzled me as symbols. It was so much easier to look at Thoth with an ibis head, or at the solemn apes.

We were to eat at the rest house on the opposite side of the mountain. The path was so precipitous that everyone had to dismount, a gigantic urn flaking into powdery runnels. The donkeys stuck in lava-like dust, four feet together and refused to budge. The sand got in our eyes, men shouted, two terrified females turned and rode round for hours by the desolate valley road that we had left. I was pulled, first by one, then by another, steps made no impression on the crumbling surface. It was the place where sunstrokes happened regularly each voyage. Imagination might have pictured anything but discomfort stopped us from thinking, we choked and slid and got to the top to find that the other side was steeper, even more broken, but with the plain below, and a line of faint green. The sun catching the grains of dust made us seem to wade through gold.

It was two o'clock when we got to the Rest House, a square white building Cook's had built so that exhausted sightseers could be fed.

I was impatient of lunch, the crown of the day waited for me. I had read all the interesting pages in the guide book, people frowned if I scuffed the sand against their chairs. Veils had been thrown back and helmets hung on hooks. My elders "rested", chattering and contented, whilst I sat, not very quietly, wondering why minutes stretched sometimes like a worn elastic on an old hat. At three a procession formed, the ladies opened their umbrellas, the soft silk robes of the dragomen dotted the way with cinnamon and pomegranate banners. They let me rush ahead with a solitary guide to the Queen's white temple, to the terraces that were the colour, I imagined, of myrrh.

Nothing in childhood excited me as much as Punt. Half my waking and all my dream life was centred in it. One of the first stories I wrote (painfully by hand, because it was before the days of typewriters, eight exercise pages long) was about a boy who stowed away on the voyage and came back with a monkey and a pot of spice trees. The pictures were like an adventure book only more important; they were *true*. I could see them myself, sailors trotting down a gangplank just as they had loaded our steamer at Naples. Here were huts on piles, like those

of the lake-dwellers, throwing-sticks, and apes. I wanted to look at every stone, list them and learn them by heart. Why couldn't I read all the hieroglyphics and not just the easy ones? Had they sailed up the Nile as some said, to disembark and traverse to the Red Sea with the caravans or had there really been a canal for the ships, swallowed up centuries afterwards by that rapacious crocodile, the sand.

Where was Punt? Was it the Somali coast? Did it matter where it was, so long as it was Africa?

Punt was real but I was not nearly so sure that I was alive. It was easy to believe in "God's Land", far more difficult to be certain that the self that saw the myrrh tubs and heard the oars was the same self that walked down a seaside front in gloves and a little tippet. It was almost too great an emotional experience. Supposing what happened in books should become routine everyday life? There would be no more veils, no more petticoats, no more "if you do that you'll make yourself ill". I could only notice and not reconcile the discrepancy between Victorian values and Punt, alive, like my friends the spice-gatherers, in a cracking, bourgeois world.

There were various roads to the Nile. All were shorter than the gorge and led to fields separated not by hedges but by channels, narrower than a trough, between onions, leeks, sugar canes, and maize. In an open space a huge granite basin with polished, curving sides served as a summer cradle for the children. "You would be safe," Ali pointed out the sloping edge, "no scorpions can climb it." Small boys chased us, naked except for tiny turbans; they had great fun keeping their legs, the colour of strong tea, just out of reach of fly switches and sticks.

It was almost sunset when we stopped before the twin cliff-high Colossi, facing the river. Below them the plain was a shallow fisherman's basket, stalks and sand and grasses overlapping in tiny scales of grey, ochre, and rush-green. The day had been so extraordinary that I waited, hoping but not believing that something might happen of itself. I had read about the singing in the guide book, how the Romans had listened, how it had suddenly ceased. Perhaps some excavator could find an inscription, move a stone and start the Colossus again, singing in ancient Egyptian, so that we had the sounds as well as the picture of the words. Behind us I could see the Punt temple and the hyena coloured hills. The donkey boy muttered phrases I could only half understand; to him also the statues were mysterious. Memnon, I said, Memnon. He had been one of my favourite warriors from the Greek tale, only if these figures were of an Egyptian ruler and not of an Ethiopian, how true was the Trojan war? Such a thought struck at the very roots of history. I looked at the battered blocks, the first of which was so much higher than my head, and knew myself lost, groping for something not yet thought in this age, as if a soul had unexpectedly forgotten the first sacred word.

It was cool and almost dark when we came to the eastern bank. There were birds again, the rowers began their song. A sail rose, the shape of a poem, canvas and quartz coloured, against the carnelian Libyan sky.

Days followed each other ; we often rode to the other side though we never made the full trip again in a single day. There was Karnak to visit ; the Ramasseum to see, the pictures of the Syrian wars. We sat in the hotel garden or went sailing on the river and all the time I was a chariot boy or a stowaway to Punt.

I was an archæologist and wise, but sometimes there were lapses. One afternoon, having been more troublesome than usual, I was sent early to bed, in disgrace, without a book. This was asking for trouble. I did not feel like repeating my hieroglyphic alphabet. I knew that however much I wished, I should never go to a chariot school. A story I had read in some boy's book or travel tale slipped into my mind ; natives, they said, were terrified of ghosts.

I freed my top sheet, draped it round me, and turned out the light. Moonlight came through the slats of the blinds. Presently the Egyptian knocked, who came every evening to pull the mosquito nets and empty the wash basins, it was long before the days of taps. Hearing no sound, he opened the door and, as he came in, I crawled slowly upwards, uttering little whistling grunts. The man turned suddenly, saw me, dropped his pail. A loud wounded yell rather than cry startled the entire hotel. He trembled, staring at me, his teeth chattering, unable to move.

My family believed me to have been murdered.

It is recorded that upon returning from my supposed rescue, my father's disgusted report was, " she has turned a black man white."

Next morning there was a solemn conference which I was forbidden to attend. No native servant would approach the bungalow. I had bewitched it and might bewitch them. My victim had spent the night wailing and was very ill. It was known now that I was a small but powerful evil spirit. It would be better to remove me immediately. There was, after all, the hotel to be considered.

I escaped a whacking in the general consternation although Ali offered the loan of a well-seasoned hippopotamus whip. I cannot remember that I was particularly repentant though I was genuinely amazed at the success of my trick. Fate punished me, however, in pure Greek tradition. The previous night I had deemed it prudent to go immediately to sleep. My victim had had no time to draw the mosquito nets. As a result, both my eyes were closed for some days so that I was unable to read, and my arms were bandaged up to the elbows.

Fortunately, we left for Assuan the following day.

*(To be continued.)*

## AN AFTERNOON WITH TCHELITCHEW

By WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS

A HOT JUNE afternoon, 1937. East 57th St., N.Y., studio apartment, 5th floor, rear. 5 p.m. The model about to leave, waiting, before going home to her husband, to pour tea for us.

Any who would know and profit by his knowledge of the great must lead a life of violent opposites. The deeper at moments of penetration is his mastery of their work, the more vigorously at other moments must he fling himself off from them to remain himself a man. But if he himself would do great works also only by this violence, this completeness of his wrenching free, will he be able to use that of which their greatness has consisted.

The failure to understand this condemns the perennial student who has, in short, by a sort of sluggishness shown himself to have succumbed to the effects of former greatness and not profited by it to establish his own mastery. This is the banality of the academic, maliciously called the cultivation of "tradition", maliciously because under it is implied an attack upon the "radical" who does not submit himself to such respectable negation.

A man must know but he will not be told how he must know nor submit to the terms of those who make knowledge no more, very often, than self-denial in subservience to honorific symbols by which they seek to maintain dominance over him while he is seeking the substance at cost of the letter. But it is man who must be achieved.

These convictions had come to life in the presence of Tchelitchev's canvasses. Not a very "good" painter. He was saying so himself, in deep respect for the deftness of the Spanish and French moderns among his friends. He only wished he might be able to handle his materials with their ease, their amazing facility. He referred to the new sensations, to Dali especially.

They are my good friends, he said. Dali is a jeweller in paint. And he sees everything. He has eyes that stick out, like the eyes of a crab. And he eats the world of the eyes, like a crab. Numb, numb, numb, numb! And T. brought the fingers of both hands up before his mouth, rapidly wiggling them toward his moving lips as if it was a crab or a lobster jiggling his mandibles and feeding. It is very beautiful, he said. But what are they doing? Sucking it in and passing it out again, their charming compositions. What do we care? They have eaten. We are very glad. There is nothing they do not eat, there is nothing they do not see. Such eyes! They make very fine compositions. That is the French influence.

Yesterday, he said, there was a woman here in the studio. A very rich old woman. Ooo ! I did not dare offend her. She had on a hat with feathers and ribbons like—I can't describe it. Many, many different colours. Like a parrot. And a dress ! with a piece of lace, a piece of silk, a piece of blue, green—anything you can imagine. And she talked, cha, cha, cha, cha, cha, cha ! all the time. Like a parrot. She was a parrot. Perfect.

It was amazing. It was bewildering. You would not believe there could be such a person. And she was interested. She wanted to see.

So I showed her the big canvas I am working on. This here. She looked and in her voice, like a parrot, she said, Oh Mr. Tchelitchew ! you paint nothing but monsters !

The painting was before us. I looked at it for a long time. Nothing but human monsters of one sort or another. It was a canvas of, perhaps, eight by twelve feet. It wasn't finished, though most of it had been drawn in. Figures of all sorts filled it, of all sizes, spreading out upon a background of mountain, classical ruin, and Mexican adobe house, with sea and sky going off toward the top and back. Small in the centre was the face of an old woman, a tormented, wrinkled face—as if under a lens ; above that a tennis court with naked figures on it, below a glacier prospect made of ice-heads, infants packed in as though they were rounded ice-cubes in a modern refrigerator.

To the left, the signature, a man with one enormous foot, the back of Diego Rivera it may be, painting the wall of a house. Siamese twins, women with six breasts, acephalic monsters, three-legged children, double-headed monsters, sexual freaks, dwarfs, giants, achondroplastic midgets, mongolian idiots, and the starved, bloated, misshapen by idea and social accident—of all the walks of life.

In the foreground was a surf with a girl in a pink bathing suit. They ask me if it is surrealist ! What do you think ? He looked at me.

As a physician, no, I answered. And why not ? Because these things are drawn from life, I said. You see that, you see that ! He was delighted. Of course, you are a doctor. That is beautiful. He was delighted.

What is surrealism ? Anybody can do that. What a lot of fooling nonsense.

As a fact every monster in the picture was authentic. It was actually what is found in life. He has taken things which do occur every day for his mirror. It is a mirror, he added, for them to see themselves.

Our life is horrible, he said. We are monsters. We hate each other and we try to destroy everything that is lovely. And we hide it. No. We *are* beasts—I beg pardon to the beasts. Even our language is distorted, we say we are like "beasts" who are lovely. But we are disgusting. And when I show them how disgusting they are they say, He only wants to paint monsters !

I don't want to paint monsters. Pretty soon I will be tired of



monsters. I want to communicate with people. That is painting. The ancients knew what painting was. It is to say something. It is to communicate. It is to use beautiful colours because we love them. We enjoy what is lovely and we paint to speak of it. Because we want to tell somebody that we like this and they must see it because we like it.

That is why I want to paint everything soft. Because I love feathers and pearls and fluffy things that hold the light and split it into rainbows. I am a very poor painter. I cannot paint like those Spaniards. I work very hard but I go very slow. When I have filled these spaces—pointing to unfinished places on the picture—then I will work to get the texture I desire. I want to make it beautiful, everything the most delicate shading of the colours, light as a feather. That is why I have painted it as a double rainbow. Because the rainbow is phenomenal. It is charming to me. I like it. I will paint it that way.

Indeed all the figures in the picture, the monsters waiting to be beautified of the softness and the colours were, as they occurred in various parts of the picture, either green or red or purple or blue—but the colours quite realistically modulated. As if they had been seen toward evening here, at noon there, and at sunrise there, before a storm, as it might be.

What do they mean by composition? There are half a dozen compositions. Everybody knows them. What is that? They balance here, there. What does it mean? Cézanne! Pooh. Yes, he could paint a good composition. He knew how to paint colours. But what is it? Another tree. Another orange. Another table with flowers. What does it mean? Always the same. I am tired of that.

That is enough of that. He turned the big picture to the wall. Let me show you some portraits.

Do you like this one? I paint my portraits all after I have made the sketch, a year afterward perhaps. When I feel what I wish to see and I know how to do it. This morning I painted this face of Edith Sitwell all over. I could finish it to-day. What do you think?

It was a white looking woman in a nun's habit. She was sitting as if in a straightback, medieval chair, completely self absorbed, ascetic, severe. It was a shock to me after what I thought I had known of the woman's verse.

She is like that, he said. A very beautiful woman. She is alone. She is very positive and very emotional. She takes herself very seriously and seems to be cold as ice. She is not so. I wanted to paint her as I know her. What do you think?

I am glad to know her. I didn't know her. Never thought much of her verse.

Oh, you don't know her then, he said. This will be your introduction. You will see if I am not right. An amazing woman.

And these—this is Ford and his sister. He showed me the portraits



of the two young Americans. Their faces were made to radiate the opalescent colours he loves. I looked back at the Sitwell again. Her face, I saw now, was not white but all the colours of the rainbow minutely blended, not *pointilliste*, but soft as feathers, as down.

You have seen enough paintings, he said, for one afternoon. Next year you shall see the big one—when I have been able to finish it. You will see the difference. Every part of it must be done as I have done the face of Edith Sitwell—this morning. Delicate and soft, with all the colours of the rainbow. You will like it then.

## IN OUR TOWN

MENEXEUS (*addresses a chance acquaintance, in the longshoremen's inn, before the Egilian breakwater*):

## I

TRUE, THE WALLS fell,  
we had neither much beauty nor fame,  
so when the hosts came,  
we withstood them,  
no more ;

the horde pushed behind and before,  
the gates weren't worth bashing down,  
nor the gold-lions,  
their cover  
of old-gold ;

(they'll stand by the market,  
when his fine-goods are forfeit ;)

true, we didn't go out of our way to stop them,  
true, the walls fell,  
but my grandfather  
found a new trick of an angle ;

we were a little out of the pulse of things,  
we haven't much of a name,  
provincial, he called us,  
and other things still worse,  
but my sister  
discovered a new chord  
to the harp-frame.

## II

She was married to that Theban,  
she could have turned a knife in his heart any day,  
but she didn't,  
she went quietly  
her way ;

he was patrician,  
he spoke much of his connection ;  
my father was pounding away,  
his hands  
thick with white dust,  
clotted with wet clay ;

he had an idea of establishing a new architrave,  
 I didn't understand,  
 I was no artisan,  
 I spell from dictation,  
 sub-clerk to this kinsman,  
 whom you know,  
 her husband ;

I am competent,  
 engrossed in a new bill of lading,  
 suggest this or that,  
 you know how I speak to him,  
 " why not apples in the hold of the *Naiad*,  
 who touches to-morrow  
 a near island,  
 or dried grapes ? "

## III

I calculate the number of the ships in the bay,  
 I say,  
 " so much grain,  
 so much wheat,  
 so many miles to Cos,  
 if this wind holds,  
 so many hours on,  
 then back in the autumn ; "

I watch the cycle of the stars,  
 now red Mars,  
 now the storm-Hyades,  
 I know the swarm of gold-bees,  
 can calculate  
 stress and weight ;

I enumerate the possible action of the small-tide  
 and the great drag-under  
 at the Needles,  
 can discuss freight,  
 intricate detail  
 of foreign and nicked coin,  
 debased coinage,  
 and the recurring problem  
 of the silver and gold-weight ;

I am after all,  
a Greek,  
though no Theban,  
in his sense,  
nor patrician ;  
we are, here, lamentably out of date ;  
my father still holds to the Doric kymation.

## IV

We will wait ;  
I hear my sister singing by the lion-gate ;  
she thinks no one goes there ;  
she hasn't much to fear,  
no one can understand anyhow,  
her metre's too intricate ;

she sings of blue-prows,  
she sings of black prow,  
she sings of a sword so white,  
so luminous, that its own light  
alone must slay ;  
she sings of a sword, a sword, a sword,  
and I creep away ;

I mustn't listen to this ;

I slip back to the house,  
"O," I say, quietly  
(you know my manner  
with this kinsman,  
our brother)  
"you know, you better recall the *Thetis*,  
the Dragon, in the sky last night,  
bore no good omen  
to that ship."

## V

She hates,  
O, how she hates ;  
I say,  
"you will be alone next week ;  
remember,  
he visits the run of the small-ports ;  
what is there for you to do, but wait ?

for me  
but to calculate  
the rise of the Kids,  
the depth off the bay,  
the stress of timber ?

what is there to say  
to that patrician, our brother,  
who yet stands on good terms  
with the merchants ? ”

of course there is always chance,  
and maybe—I could calculate—

after all,  
there is stress and over-stress,  
there is weight and over-weight ;  
there are the good Needles  
the twin-rocks,  
there is the beach  
and the break of surf ;  
or a word to a sailor.

## VI

What,  
you are that sailor ?  
well, could we do better than  
another goblet of wine-of-Cos ?

H. D.

## ORESTES THEME

*Orestes :* NOT GOD,  
 not God  
 with the pine-crowned rod,  
 not God with the sickle,  
 not God,  
 not God  
 to betray with a nod  
 youth into battle,  
 not God  
 with wine,  
 nor death,  
 nor hate for a cry,  
 but God with a song ;

late,  
 late to answer,  
 long, long to make amend,  
 and what does he send ?  
 murder ;  
 I ask and I pray,  
 I beg, I beseech, I implore,  
 and what does he say ?  
 slay ;  
 slay, slay your mother,  
 slay her beloved,  
 slay love ;  
 O, God,  
 O, my lover,  
 why did I follow  
 a song ?

*Electra :* Fair days are over,  
 is there yet terror to come ?  
 men, men, my brother,  
 will slay us,  
 men will lift stones,  
 obeying the writ of their altar,  
 to drive us from home,  
 there is no island  
 no city,  
 no rock in the sea  
 for us ;  
 if we flee,

the order will follow before us,  
 if we stay,  
 they will close like the net,  
 from the hills,  
 from the coves of the bay ;  
 from the wood,  
 from the field, they will come ;

Orestes, fly first,  
 there is shelter  
 there is hope  
 in the song.

*Orestes :*      How can I go,  
                     O my sister,  
                     and leave you to death ?  
                     mine was the sword, mine, mine the command,  
                     is God-the-sun cursed ?

*Electra :*      I am older,  
                     a woman ;  
                     Agamemnon stood by the throne  
                     while the priests  
                     chanted pæon,  
                     and wonder  
                     fell on us,  
                     a prince had been born ;  
                     I remember the throne,  
                     I remember the serpent of bronze  
                     on his arm  
                     and the bronze and gold circlet, his crown ;  
                     in my thought I can touch and remember ;  
                     God, God,  
                     he is gone :

but Orestes  
 in that child,  
 in that prince (I remember),  
 he lives yet ;  
 while you live,  
 he lives,  
 while you breathe,  
 he breathes  
 with your breath.

*Orestes* :      You are maiden,  
no woman,  
you are slender and faultless and rare,  
you are child of my father,  
how could I leave you,  
be gone,  
while they break you  
and slay you ?  
love does not ask it,  
nor song.

H. D.



## POEM

YOU, MY BELOVED, by the loved rocks sitting,  
I know your fear and I know your fretting.  
I know how this green tide sliding and receding  
At the black cliff's foot, seems no more greedy  
And no more vain in greed than your hard loving.

I know how I seem moody and unsure  
Vast and indefinite as its uneasy power,  
I know your thought and have no comfort to give.  
You fear the whole devaluation of love  
Which so darkly infuses the one act of living.

Yet remember too, it is your living I love,  
Your thought and decision, your every act and move.  
Your heart is nothing to me except its beating,  
Your mind exists only in its noble fighting  
For light and reason against mine, and all deceiving.

You are lovely now as you struggle, now as you weep  
In the throes of knowing love has nothing to keep  
Of any moment ; only in making and awaking  
Power for each hour of struggle, love in taking  
The inevitable for truth, is free from grieving.

For you and I as lovers are no less  
And no more than mankind. Love's distress  
Has the same root as hunger's. Between you and me  
That bondage is broken down, our unity  
But makes more strong our part in all men's striving.

And you and I, my love, are no less welded  
By acting in that world in which we are folded.  
Are no less close by going apart  
Since it is the longing for freedom from which our love must start  
Whose silent passion is all our movement driving.

RANDALL SWINGLER

## YOUTH

I TRY TO remember the things  
At home that mean Wales but typical  
Isn't translated across  
The Channel : I try to create,  
Doors grow into masts, love losses  
In the village wood, but boyhood's  
Fear fled into the pale skeleton  
Of the dark mountain, into  
The bilingual valley filled  
Through a sail-hole of my drying  
Feelings. But I try. Lightning  
Is different in Wales.

KEIDRYCH RHYS

## AUBADE

HOURS BEFORE DAWN we were woken by the quake.  
My house was on a cliff. The thing could take  
Bookloads off shelves, break bottles in a row.  
Then the long pause and then the bigger shake.  
It seemed the best thing to be up and go.

And far too large for my feet to step by.  
I hoped that various buildings were brought low.  
The heart of standing is you cannot fly.

It seemed quite safe till she got up and dressed.  
The guarded tourist makes the guide the test.  
Then I said The Garden? Laughing she said No.  
Taxi for her and for me healthy rest.  
It seemed the best thing to be up and go.

The language problem but you have to try.  
Some solid ground for lying could she show?  
The heart of standing is you cannot fly.

None of these deaths were her point at all.  
The thing was that being woken he would bawl  
And finding her not in earshot he would know.  
I tried saying half an hour to pay this call.  
It seemed the best thing to be up and go.

I slept, and blank as that I would yet lie.  
Till you have seen what a fright has to show  
The heart of standing is you cannot fly.

Tell me again about Europe and her pains,  
Who's tortured by the drought, who by the rains.  
Glut me with floods where only the swine can row  
Who cuts his throat and let him count his gains.  
It seemed the best thing to be up and go.

A bedshift flight to a Far Eastern sky.  
Only the same war on a stronger toe.  
The heart of standing is you cannot fly.

This is unjust to her without a prose book.  
A lyric from a fact is bound to cook.  
It was more grinding; it was much more slow.  
But still the point's not how much time it took.  
It seemed the best thing to be up and go.

## POETRY

69

I do not know what forces made it die.  
With what black life it may yet work below.  
The heart of standing is you cannot fly.

Tell me more quickly what I lost by this,  
Or tell me with less drama what they miss.  
Who call no die a god for a good throw,  
Who say after two aliens had one kiss  
It seemed the best thing to be up and go.

But as to risings, I can tell you why.  
It is on contradiction that they grow.  
It seemed the best thing to be up and go.  
Up was the heartening and the strong reply.  
The heart of standing is we cannot fly.

WILLIAM EMPSON.

## TWO POEMS FOR CHRISTMAS, 1937

## STAR BY DAY

WE DON'T HAVE to know,  
only to be :  
let go the jumble of worn words,  
reason and vanity :

a star, a bird, an ox,  
straw in a bin,  
a reasonable dash of salt,  
the price of sin :

where other err,  
I have done worse than they ;  
they had not seen, I saw  
that Star by day :

they groped to find the Sun,  
I shot past heaven's centrifugal heaven,  
to find  
the ultimate Sun that makes our own sun, blind :

peace in the Pleiades,  
that central hearth,  
radium  
to our earth :

fear not : that ultimate Star is frail,  
only a flake of snow,  
whirled in His breath ;  
be still and know,

flaked from His wings,  
the stars and ultimate suns  
fall softly on our hands,  
His will being done

by children who call in joy  
from the window-pane,  
" it's snow, it's snow, it's snow,"  
but snow is rain,

POETRY

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tears (blessed are they)  
whose fears, drawn back to cloud,  
fall, to blot out all ill ;  
O star-spun shroud,

fall softly on all of us ;  
I have done worse than they,  
they had not seen, I saw  
that Star by day.

H. D.

## WOODEN ANIMAL

YOU THINK A wooden animal  
is a simple thing ;  
it's not,  
it's more important,  
I believe,  
than Sirius  
or Algol  
or Saturn's starry ring ;

the beginning and the end  
is there, is here ;  
between, our fingers strive to weave,  
but bright threads tear,

and dark and knotted  
block the delicate woof,  
and we forget the pattern  
and this proof

that God is here ;  
what woodman carved this square ?  
this bullock's painted feet  
stand beside Apis, Ra ;

where wave and Nile wave meet,  
Upper and Lower Kingdom will declare  
God's in this wooden toy,  
no less

than where  
great Taurus ploughs his course,  
with ruby eye  
on jewelled Archer  
and the glittering Bear.

H. D.

# THE WALL

A STORY OF THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR

By JEAN-PAUL SARTRE

THEY PUSHED US into a great white room, and I began to blink because the sun hurt my eyes. Then I saw a table with four fellows behind it, civilians, looking at some papers. The other prisoners had been herded into the back of the room and we had to cross right over to join them. There were several I knew, and some others who must have been foreigners. The two in front of me were fair, with round heads. They looked alike—Frenchmen, I supposed. The smaller one kept hitching up his trousers.

It lasted nearly three hours ; I was dazed and light-headed, but the room was well heated and I thought it rather pleasant. For the last twenty-four hours we hadn't stopped shivering. The guards brought the prisoners to the table, one by one. The four men there asked them their name and profession. For the most part they didn't pursue the inquiry, but sometimes they asked, " Did you take part in the blowing-up of the munitions ? " Or, " Where were you on the morning of the 9th, and what were you doing ? " They didn't listen to the answers—or at least, so it seemed. They were merely silent a moment, looking straight ahead ; then they began to write on their papers.

They asked Tom if it were true that he served with the International Brigade : Tom couldn't deny this because of the papers they had found in his coat. They didn't question Juan, but after he had given his name, they wrote for a long time.

" It's my brother José, who's an anarchist," Juan said. " You know he's not living here any more. I don't belong to any party. I've never had anything to do with politics." They didn't reply.

" I haven't done anything," Juan repeated. " Why should I foot the bill ? "

His lips trembled. A guard silenced him and led him away. It was my turn.

" Your name is Pablo Ibbieta ? "

I told them it was.

The man looked at his papers and said,

" Where is Ramon Gris ? "

" I don't know."

" You hid him in your house from the 6th to the 19th."

" No."

They wrote for a bit, then the guards took me out. In the passage Tom and Juan were waiting for me between two guards. We set off.

" Now what ? " Tom asked one of the guards.



"What?" said the guard.

"Is that an examination or a trial?"

"It was a trial," said the guard.

"Well? What will they do with us?"

The guard replied dryly, "The sentence will be made known to you in your cells."

Actually our "cell" was one of the hospital cellars. It was terribly cold because of the draughts. We had shivered the whole night long and by day it was scarcely any better. I had spent the five preceding days in a hiding-place in the archbishop's palace—a kind of medieval trap-dungeon. I hadn't been cold, but I was lonely, and that puts you on edge in the long run.

In the cellar was a bench and four palliasses. When they had brought us back we sat down and waited in silence. After a time, Tom said,

"We're done for."

"I think so too," I said, "but I don't think they'll touch that youngster."

"They've nothing against him," said Tom. "He's the brother of a combatant, that's all."

I looked at Juan. He didn't seem to be listening.

"You know what they do at Saragossa?" Tom went on. "They lay the chaps down on the road and run lorries over them. A deserting trooper from Morocco told us about it. They say it saves bullets."

"It doesn't save petrol," I remarked. I was annoyed with Tom; he shouldn't have said this.

"Then there are officers walking up and down with their hands in their pockets, smoking cigarettes. Do you think they'd finish a chap off? Not they! They let them scream. Sometimes for an hour. The black trooper told me he was nearly sick the first time."

"I don't think they do that here," I said. "Unless they're really short of ammunition."

Daylight was coming in through four vent-holes and through a round opening on the left, in the ceiling, through which you could see the sky. It was through this round hole, normally covered by a trap-door, that they shot the coal into the cellar. Just under the hole was a big heap of coal-dust. Since the outbreak of war the patients had been evacuated from the hospital and the coal lay there unused; it even got rained on, because they had forgotten to close the trap.

I wasn't exactly cold, but I had no more feeling in my shoulders and arms. From time to time I had the impression there was something missing, and I would begin to look around for my coat; and then I would notice that they hadn't given me a coat. It was rather painful. They had taken away our clothes to give to their soldiers, and had only left us our shirts and those thin cotton trousers that patients wear in the heat of summer.

Tom shivered, then began to do some physical jerks. Presently he came and sat down near me, blowing hard.

About eight o'clock an officer entered with two Phalangists. He was holding a sheet of paper.

"What are their names?" he asked the guard.

"Steinbock, Ibbieta, and Mirbal."

The officer put on his spectacles, and looked at his list. "Steinbock . . . Steinbock . . . here we are. . . . You're condemned to death. You will be shot to-morrow."

He gave another look.

"And the others too."

"That can't be right," said Juan. "Not me!"

The officer gazed at him in astonishment.

"What's your name?" he asked.

"Juan Mirbal."

"Well, your name's down," replied the officer, "you are sentenced to death."

"I haven't done anything," said Juan.

The officer shrugged his shoulders and turned to Tom and me.

"You are Basques?"

"No."

He looked annoyed.

"They told me there were three Basques here. I'm not going to waste my time running after them. Well, you won't be wanting a priest, of course?"

We didn't even reply. He said, "A Belgian doctor will be along presently. He has permission to spend the night with you."

He saluted and went out.

"What did I tell you," said Tom. "We're for it."

"Yes," I said, slowly. "But it's lousy for that kid."

I just said that to be fair, but I didn't really like him. His face was too soft, and fear and suffering had disfigured it and distorted its features. Three days before, he was nice-looking in a rather mawkish way, but now he looked like an old woman; and I thought he would never be young again, not even if they set him free. He didn't say any more, but he had grown grey: his hands and his face were grey. He sat down again, and his round eyes stared at the ground. Tom was a kind soul; he wanted to take his arm, but the youngster shook him off, making a face.

"Let him be," I said. "Can't you see he's going to howl?"

Tom obeyed, reluctantly. He would have liked to comfort the boy, to avoid the temptation of thinking about himself.

"Have you bumped any fellows off?" he then asked. I didn't answer; I was wondering if one suffered much; I was thinking of the bullets; I imagined their burning shower through my body. After

a time, Tom stopped talking, and I looked at him out of the corner of my eye. I saw that he had grown grey, that he too looked wretched, and I said, "It's the beginning."

It was nearly dark. A wan light filtered through the vent-holes and the coal-heap made a big splodge beneath the sky. I saw a star through the hole in the ceiling; the night would be cold and fine.

The door opened, and two guards came in. They were followed by a fair man in a Belgian uniform. He saluted us and said, "I'm a doctor. I have permission to assist you in these painful circumstances."

He had a pleasant, refined voice.

"What have you come to do?" I asked.

"I'm at your service. I will do my very best to lighten these last hours."

"Why have you come to us? There are others. The hospitals are full of them."

"I have been sent here," he replied, vaguely. "Oh! you'd like a smoke, I expect. I've some cigarettes and cigars."

He offered us some English cigarettes and some Spanish cigars, but we refused them. I looked him straight in the face and he seemed uneasy.

"You haven't come here out of pity," I said. "Besides, I know you, I saw you with the fascists in the barrack-yard the day I was arrested."

I was going to go on, but suddenly something surprised me: the presence of this doctor all at once ceased to interest me. Usually when I come to grips with a man I don't let go, but now I shrugged my shoulders and looked away. A little later on I raised my head. He was looking at me with a strange look. The guards were sitting on a palliasse. Pedro, the long thin one, was twiddling his thumbs; the other was shaking his head from time to time to keep himself awake.

"Would you like a light?" Pedro suddenly asked the doctor.

The doctor nodded. He looked about as intelligent as a block of wood, but probably he was quite kind-hearted. Pedro got up and returned with a paraffin lamp which he set on one end of the bench. It gave a poor light, but was better than nothing. The night before they had left us in the dark. I gazed at the round patch of light thrown up on the ceiling. It fascinated me. Then suddenly I woke up; the patch vanished, and I felt crushed beneath an enormous weight. It was neither the thought of death, nor fear: it was unnameable. My cheeks were burning and my head ached.

I shook myself and looked at my two companions. Tom had buried his head in his hands, and I could see his fat, white neck. Young Juan was much less composed: his mouth was open and his nostrils quivered. The doctor went over to him and put his hand on his shoulder as if to comfort him; but his eyes remained cold. Then I saw the Belgian's

hand slip slyly down Juan's arm to his wrist. Juan sat still, indifferent. The Belgian took his wrist between three fingers with a detached air, and at the same time drew back a bit to hide Juan from me. But I leant forward and saw him pull out his watch and consult it a moment without leaving go of the youngster's wrist. After a little, he let the hand flop and went and stood over against the wall; then, as if he had suddenly remembered something important to note down, he took a little book from his pocket and scribbled a few lines. "The dirty dog!" I thought, angrily, "if he comes near me, I'll give him a sock in the jaw."

He didn't come, but I felt him looking at me. I raised my head and returned his gaze. He said in an impersonal tone,

"Don't you think it freezing down here?"

He looked cold: almost purple.

"I'm not cold," I replied.

He went on staring at me. Suddenly I realized, and put my hands to my face; it was drenched with sweat. I passed my fingers through my hair: it bristled with perspiration. At the same time I noticed that my shirt was wet and sticking to my skin. I had been dripping for at least half an hour, without feeling a thing. But it hadn't escaped that Belgian swine; he had seen the drops running down my cheeks, and had thought that it was almost a pathological case of terror. While he had felt quite normal and proud because he was cold! I wanted to get up and punch his nose; but I had hardly made a move when my shame and anger vanished. I sat back on the bench, unmoved.

"Are you a doctor?" Young Juan suddenly asked the doctor.

"Yes," replied the Belgian.

"Does one suffer . . . long?"

"When? Oh! Why no!" said the Belgian in fatherly tones.

"It's soon over." (Just as though he were soothing a paying patient!)

"But I thought . . . they said that they often have to take two rounds. . . ."

"Yes, sometimes," said the Belgian, nodding his head. "Sometimes it does happen that the first shot doesn't touch the vital organs."

"Then they have to reload their rifles and take fresh aim?"

Juan thought a moment, then added in a hoarse voice, "It must take a time!"

I got up and walked over to the coal-heap. Tom started and gave me a dirty look; I got on his nerves because my shoes squeaked. I wondered if my face was as fearful as his: I saw that he was sweating too. The sky was superb; no light crept into the quiet corner and I had only to lift my head to see the Great Bear. But it was no longer the same as before. The night before last I was able to see from my episcopal dungeon a big piece of the sky, and every hour of the day had recalled a different memory. In the morning when the sky was a hard, light

blue, I thought of the bathing-beaches round the Atlantic ; at midday, I saw the sun, and I thought of a bar in Seville where I used to drink sherry and eat anchovies and olives ; in the afternoon I was in the shade, and I thought of the deep shade that extends over one half of a bull-ring when the other half sparkles in the sun. It was really painful to see the whole world reflected in the sky. But now I could look up as long as I wished ; the sky held no more memories. And I preferred it that way. I came back and sat near Tom.

A long time passed.

Tom began to speak in low tones. He always had to talk, otherwise he couldn't shape his ideas. He was doubtless afraid at seeing me as I was, grey and sweating. We were alike, and worse than mirrors to each other. He was looking at the Belgian, that *living* man.

"Can you understand it ?" he asked. "I can't."

Then I too began to speak softly. I was looking at the Belgian.

"Well, what's the matter ?"

"Something's going to happen that I can't understand."

"You'll understand all right presently," I sniggered.

"It isn't clear," he persisted. "I want to be brave, but I must at least know. . . . Listen, they take us into the court-yard, the chaps line up in front of us, . . . how many ?"

"I don't know. Five, or eight—not more."

"All right. Say eight. They'll shout 'Present' and I shall see eight rifles pointing at me. . . . I believe I shall want to shrink into the wall. . . . I shall push the wall as hard as I can, with my back, and the wall will resist . . . like in a nightmare. . . . I can imagine all that. . . ."

"That'll do," I said, "so can I."

"It must be devilish painful. They aim at your eyes and mouth, you know, to disfigure you . . . I can feel the wounds already. I've had pains in my head and neck for the last hour. Not real pains—it's worse than that. Pains I shall feel to-morrow. . . . And then what ?"

I understood perfectly what he wanted to say, but I didn't want to appear to understand.

"And then," I said, harshly, "you'll be sucking dandelion roots !"

He began to talk to himself, but his eyes never left the Belgian. The latter did not appear to be listening. I knew what he had come to do, though ; he wasn't interested in our thoughts ; he had come to watch our bodies—our bodies that were dying a living death.

Tom went on mumbling in a distracted kind of way. He talked, of course, to stop himself from thinking. I agreed with him, naturally, and could have said all that he was saying : it is not natural to die. And, since I was going to die, nothing seemed natural any longer—neither the coal-heap, the bench, nor Pedro's ugly face. Only, I didn't

like to think the same thoughts as Tom. I gave him a side glance, and, for the first time, he looked queer to me. Death was in his face. My pride was injured. I had lived beside Tom, had listened to him, spoken to him, and yet I knew that we had nothing in common. And now we were as alike as twin brothers, simply because we were going to pass on together. Tom took my hand without looking at me.

"Pablo, I wonder . . . I wonder if it is really true that we shall be wiped out?"

I freed my hand and said,

"Look out, you dirty pig!"

There was a pool between his feet and drops were dripping off his trousers.

The Belgian came over.

"Are you ill?" he asked, with false concern.

Tom did not reply. The doctor looked at the pool, but said nothing.

"I don't know what it is," said Tom wildly, "but I'm not afraid, I swear I'm not afraid!"

The Belgian did not answer; he was making notes.

We watched him, young Juan as well. We three watched him because he was alive. He had the movements of a living being, the cares of a living being; he was shivering in this cellar as living beings shiver; he had an adaptable and well-nourished body. We three were no longer conscious of our bodies—not in the same way, at any rate. We were just three beings robbed of life, watching and sucking his life, like vampires.

He finally went over to young Juan. He stroked Juan's head and neck. The youngster let him do it without taking his eyes off him; then, suddenly, he seized the doctor's hand and looked at it in a funny way. He was holding it between his own. I had a shrewd idea of what was going to happen and Tom had too: but the Belgian couldn't make it out, and smiled in an indulgent fashion. Presently Juan put the big fat hand up to his mouth as though to bite it. The Belgian hastily shook himself free and staggered back against the wall. He looked at us with horror for a moment; it must have dawned on him that we were no longer men like himself. I began to laugh and one of the guards started up in surprise; the other was sound asleep.

I felt tired, but over-excited. I didn't want to think about the dawn, about death. But as soon as I tried to think of something else I saw guns levelled at me. I must have lived my execution twenty times over. Once I thought I was a goner; I expect I fell asleep for a moment. They were dragging me towards the wall and I was struggling; I begged for mercy. I woke with a start and looked at the Belgian. I was afraid of having shouted in my sleep, but he was smoothing his moustache and hadn't noticed anything. I think I could have slept a little had I wished; I had been up for forty-eight hours and

was worn out. But I didn't want to lose two hours of life. They would have woken me up at dawn ; I should have followed them, dazed with sleep ; and I should have passed out without a word. I didn't want to do that, I didn't want to die like a dumb animal ; I wanted to understand. Also, I was afraid of having nightmares. I rose and walked up and down ; and to take my mind off the present, I began to think of the past. A host of memories surged back, helter-skelter—some good, some bad—or at least I should have called them bad before this. There were faces and stories. I saw the face of a little *novillero*, who got gored at Valencia during the festival ; I saw the face of one of my uncles, and that of Ramon Gris. I remembered certain episodes : how I had been out of work for three months in 1926 : how I had nearly died of hunger. I remembered a night I had slept on a bench in Granada ; I hadn't eaten for three days, I was furious, and hadn't wanted to die. That made me smile. How eagerly had I pursued happiness, women, freedom. And for what ? I wanted to free Spain ; I admired Pi y Margall ; I had stuck to the anarchist movement, had spoken at public meetings, I had taken everything seriously, as though I were immortal. Just then the whole of my life seemed spread out before me and I thought, "It's a bloody lie." It was worthless because it was over. I wondered how I could ever have gone out and about and chased after women. I shouldn't have lifted a finger had I thought I was going to die like this. My life was before me, clapped shut like a book, and yet all it contained was unfinished. For a moment I tried to judge it. I wanted to say : it's been a fine life. But you couldn't judge it, it was just a sketch. I had no regrets, although there were heaps of things I might have regretted : the taste of sherry, or those summer bathes in a little creek near Cadiz. But death had taken the zest from recollection.

Suddenly the Belgian had a fine idea.

"Look here," he said, "if the military authorities allow it, I'll undertake to write a little note to any of your friends."

Tom groaned. "I've no one."

I didn't answer. Tom looked at me curiously for a second, then said, "You're not going to let Concha know ?"

"No."

I hated that tender participation. It was my fault, of course, for telling him about Concha the night before ; I should have kept it to myself. I was with her a year. Yesterday evening, I would have given my right hand to see her again just for five minutes. That's why I had spoken of her ; it was stronger than I. And now I didn't want to see her ; I had nothing to tell her. I shouldn't even have wanted to hold her in my arms. I was afraid of my body because it had grown grey and sweaty—and I thought maybe I should have been afraid of hers. Concha would cry when she learnt of my death ; for months

he wouldn't want to go on living. Yet it was I who had to die ; and was alone.

Tom was alone too, but not in the same way. He was sitting astride the bench and was looking at it with a kind of astonished smile. He put out his hand and touched the wood carefully, as if he were afraid of breaking something ; then he withdrew his hand quickly and huddled. I too thought that things had an odd look : they were less distinct and dense than usual. I had only to look at the bench, the lamp, the heap of coal-dust, and I felt I was going to die. Naturally, I couldn't think my death clearly, but I saw it on all sides—in objects and the way they had receded. They held themselves at a discreet distance, like people talking in hushed tones around a death-bed. When Tom touched that bench, he had touched his own death.

It would have left me unmoved in my present condition if they had come and announced that I could go quietly home, that my life was spared ; a few hours or a few years of waiting are alike when you have lost the illusion of eternity. In one sense, I was calm : I didn't cling to anything. But it was a ghastly calm—because of my body, my body which I saw with the body's eyes and heard with the body's ears, but it was no longer I. It sweated and trembled by itself ; I no longer recognized it. I was obliged to touch it and look at it, as if it were someone else's body.

The Belgian pulled out his watch and consulted it.

" It's half-past three," he said.

The dirty dog ! He must have said that on purpose. Tom jumped ; he hadn't realized the lapse of time. Night had shrouded us in a dark, shapeless mass ; I hardly realized when it had begun.

Young Juan began to howl. He wrung his hands, crying, " I don't want to die, I don't want to die ! "

He ran the entire length of the cellar with his arms in the air, then collapsed on to a pallet and sobbed. Tom watched him with mournful eyes, but no longer wanted to comfort him. Indeed, it hardly seemed worth while : the youngster made more noise than we, but he was suffering less. For one solitary second I too wanted to cry, but just the opposite happened : I looked at the lad, I saw his shaking shoulders, and I felt inhuman. I couldn't be sorry for others or for myself. I said : I want to die decently.

Tom had risen ; he stationed himself just under the round opening and began to watch the daylight. But it was still dark when I heard him say,

" Can you hear them ? "

" Yes."

People were marching about the court-yard.

" What are they up to ? They can't shoot in the dark."

Then all was silent again.



"It's daylight," I said to Tom.

Pedro got up and blew out the lamp.

"Bloody cold," he remarked to his companion.

The cellar had grown quite grey. We heard some shots in the distance.

"They're beginning," I said to Tom, "they must be doing it round the back."

Tom asked the doctor for a cigarette. I didn't want one—neither tobacco nor drink. After that the firing never left off.

"Just listen to 'em!" said Tom.

He wanted to add something, but stopped, looking at the door. It opened and a lieutenant came in with four soldiers. Tom dropped his cigarette.

"Steinbock?"

Tom made no answer. Pedro pointed to him.

"Juan Mirbal?"

"The one on the palliasse."

"Get up," said the lieutenant.

Juan didn't budge. Two soldiers took him by the armpits and stood him on his feet. But as soon as they let go he slumped down. The soldiers hesitated.

"He's not the only one who's feeling ill," remarked the lieutenant.

"You two will just have to carry him and we'll fix him up out there."

He turned to Tom.

"Come on now!"

Tom went out between two soldiers; two others followed, carrying Juan by the shoulders and legs. He hadn't fainted; his eyes were wide open and tears were coursing down his cheeks. When I made to go too, the lieutenant stopped me.

"Are you Ibbieta?"

"Yes."

"You are to wait here—they'll come for you presently."

They went out. The Belgian and the two jailers went out as well, and I was left alone. I didn't understand what was happening to me, but I should have preferred them to have done with it at once. I listened to the rounds of shooting which were going off at almost regular intervals; at each one I started. I wanted to shout and tear my hair. But I gritted my teeth and buried my hands in my pockets because I wanted to stay decent.

After an hour they came to fetch me. They took me to the first floor and into a little room that smelt of cigar smoke and in which the heat seemed stifling. Two officers were sitting in arm-chairs, smoking, with papers on their laps.

"Is your name Ibbieta?"

"Yes."

"Where is Ramon Gris?"

"I don't know."

The one who questioned me was short and fat. His eyes were hard behind his glasses.

"Come here," he said.

I approached. He got up and took me by the arms and gave me a look which should have made me sink through the floor; at the same time he pinched my biceps with all his might. It wasn't to hurt me; it was all in the game! He wanted to dominate me. He also thought it necessary to blow his fetid breath full in my face. We stayed a moment in this position. I felt rather like laughing: it takes a lot more than that to intimidate a man who is going to die. It didn't work at all. He pushed me away violently and sat down again.

"It's your life against his," he said. "We'll let you go if you tell us where he is."

These fellows, all decked out with riding-whips and high boots, they too were doomed to die. A bit later than I, perhaps, but not much. And here they were busying themselves looking for names on their little lists, and running after other men to imprison or kill them; they had views on the future of Spain and on other subjects! Their activities seemed mildly shocking and grotesque. I couldn't put myself in their place. I thought they were mad.

The little man was still looking at me and drumming his boots with his whip. His every movement was calculated to make him seem like a fierce live beast.

"Well, then? You understand?"

"I don't know where he is. I thought he was in Madrid."

The other officer raised a white, indolent hand. This movement, too, was rehearsed. I saw through all their little tricks and was stupefied that there were still men who could act like this.

"You've a quarter of an hour to think it over," he said slowly. "Take him to the wash-house and bring him back in a quarter of an hour. If he still refuses, he will be shot immediately."

They knew what they were about. I had spent a whole night waiting, then they had made me wait an extra hour in the cellar while they were shooting Tom and Juan; and now they were going to shut me up in the wash-house. They must have made their plans overnight; they must have thought that nerves wear out in the long run, and hoped to get me like that.

They were mistaken. I sat down in the wash-house on a stool because I felt very weak; and I began to think. But not about their proposal. Naturally, I knew where Gris was: he was hiding in his cousin's house, a mile from the town. But I knew that I should not betray that hiding-place, unless they tortured me (but they didn't seem to have thought of that!). All that was absolutely taped; it was definite, and ceased to interest me. What I did want to know was the reason for my conduct.

I would rather die than hand over Gris. Why ? I didn't even like Ramon Gris any more. My friendship for him had died a little before the dawn, at the same time as my love for Concha, at the same time as my desire for life. Of course, I should always think well of him ; he was tough. But it wasn't for that that I was accepting to die for him ; his life had no more value than my own ; no life had any more value. They were going to stand a man up against a wall and shoot at him until he was dead : it was all the same whether that man were I, Ramon, or another. I realized that he was more useful than I to the Spanish cause, but now I didn't care a hang for Spain or for anarchy ; nothing had any importance. And yet, I could save my skin by handing over Ramon Gris, and I was refusing to do it ! I thought it rather comical : it was sheer obstinacy.

" I must be obstinate," I thought. And a kind of light-heartedness came over me.

They arrived to fetch me and take me back to the officers. A rat scurried off from under our feet and that amused me. I turned to one of the officers and said,

" Did you see that rat ? "

He did not reply. He was morose and took himself seriously. I wanted to laugh, but didn't, because I was afraid that if I started I shouldn't be able to stop. The officer had a moustache.

" You'll have to chop off that moustache, old top," I cried.

He gave me a kick, but without much conviction and I was silent.

" Well ! " said the fat little man. " Have you thought it over ? "

I eyed them curiously, as if they were rare insects.

" I know where he is," I said. " He is hiding in the cemetery. In a tomb or in the grave-diggers' shed."

It was just for a joke. I wanted to see them get up, buckle on their belts, and bustle round giving orders.

They jumped to their feet.

" Come on. Molès, go and ask Lieutenant Lopez for fifteen men. As for you," the little man said, " if you've told the truth, I've only one word to say. But you'll pay for it dearly if you're having us on."

They went out in a great stir, and I waited peacefully with the guards. I smiled from time to time when I thought of the figure they were going to cut. I felt dazed and malicious. I pictured them lifting the stones, opening up tombs one after another !

After half an hour, the short fat officer came back alone. I thought he was going to give the order for my execution. The other must have stayed behind at the cemetery.

He looked at me, but he was neither sheepish nor annoyed.

" Put him into the main courtyard with the others," he said. " After the military operations the ordinary tribunal will decide his fate."

I thought I had misunderstood.

"Then they're not . . ." I said, "they're not going to shoot me?"  
"Not now, at any rate. Afterwards, perhaps—but that doesn't concern me."

I still didn't understand.

"But why . . . ?" I asked.

He shrugged his shoulders without replying and the soldiers led me away.

There were about a hundred prisoners in the main courtyard, women, children, and a few old men. I began to walk round the centre lawn, still not understanding what had happened. I was bewildered. At midday they gave us lunch in the refectory. Two or three fellows hailed me. I must have known them, but did not reply. I did not even realize where I was.

Towards evening, a dozen or so fresh prisoners were pushed into the yard. I recognized Garcia, the baker.

"You lucky dog!" he cried. "I didn't think to see you alive!"

"They sentenced me to death," I replied, "then they changed their minds—I don't know why."

"They arrested me at two o'clock," said Garcia.

"Why?" Garcia didn't meddle with politics.

"I don't know," he said. "They arrest anyone who thinks differently from them."

He lowered his voice.

"They've got Ramon Gris."

I began to tremble.

"When?"

"This morning. He quarrelled and left his cousin's house on Tuesday. There were plenty of people who would have sheltered him, but he didn't want to be beholden to anyone. He said: 'I would have gone to Ibbieta's, but since they've taken him up, I'll go and hide in the cemetery.'"

"In the cemetery?"

"Yes. Naturally, they went over there this morning—it was bound to happen. They found him in the grave-diggers' shed. He fired on them and they had to bring him down."

"In the cemetery!"

Everyone began to turn round, and I found myself sitting on the ground. I laughed so much that tears came into my eyes.

*(Translated by C. A. Whitehouse.)*

# PATERS' MATCH<sup>1</sup>

By OSBERT SITWELL

THE CRICKET PAVILION, designed in the Swiss-Japanese style, with two scoring boards for lack-lustre eyes, stood on a little grassy eminence, cut square, and from it, to-day, floated bravely the school flag, showing the same gothic tangle of initials, in yellow upon a sepia-magenta ground, which protuberated from the caps of the eighty boys. The playing-fields were as yet deserted, save for a couple of young Saxon gardeners, with locks of tow-coloured hair falling over their foreheads, who sweated and swore profusely as they coaxed a heavy roller up and down the pitch. Nevertheless, this gentle, rather faded stretch of closely-cropped and worn grass, with its velvet sheen, lying there so calmly and peacefully in the fleecy light of the morning hours, constituted a deception, being in reality the vortex which would in an hour's time suck down into its vacant depths not only the entire system of life and discipline to which it was attached, but, also, whole railway carriages and motor-cars full of visitors. Soon, then, it would echo with the endless wooden repartee, as snip-snap and meaningless as the dialogue of a modern comedy, of bat and ball : but at present the only sound that enlivened it was the humming of the bees that thronged in golden, dusty flights the scented pagodas of the lime trees, now in flower.

\* \* \*

Already the air above the cricket-pitch, and over the green lawns, had begun to quiver with the intensity of the heat, screening the school a little, and imparting to it the air of a mirage. Indeed, there was always something a little improbable about it. Built of stone—with every individual stone faceted—in an angry, protesting gothic, every writhing bow-window, machicolation, and drain-pipe, even, seemed to be trying to escape out of its contorted mass ; although at one side the addition of a large conservatory restored some appearance of calm. . . . The boys, quieter than they would be normally at this hour, were undergoing in their hearts the usual unspoken and unspeakable agony concerning their innocent parents and the possible solecisms, the errors in dress and demeanour, the breaches of etiquette, which they might commit : if left to themselves for a minute they were sure to do something appalling. It was a strain having to keep an eye on them the whole time. . . . The young ones were, therefore, more thoughtful than usual ; and the distant shouts and yells, as from a lunatic asylum, that were wafted across the lawns from the asphalt playground by the small, warm winds rootling among the tree-tops were less strident than those to which the masters were inured.

<sup>1</sup> See *Notes on Contributors*.

All the masters, except the Head, had assembled under the Japanese shade of a cedar tree, and were preparing to keep up the traditions of the place. (The cedar itself constituted not the least of them, a source of pride to inmates and attendants alike, carrying with it Biblical similes of height and wealth, and an agreeable suggestion of King David with his harp, and of the Temple in Jerusalem. Indeed, this tree and the School Chapel—with its unimaginable wealth of painted organ-pipes, brass eagles, stained-glass windows representing Sir Galahad, marble pulpits and alabaster slabs, all memorials to boys who had been killed within a few years of leaving this place—constituted the chief sights of the domain.) Tubby Pratt, the games master and school idol, was pretending that a cone was a golf ball, making passes at it with a walking-stick. Mr. Chetham-Kitsey, the Second Head, was leaning against the bunk.

"Gosh, I feel thirsty this morning: I could put away a couple all right, if I could only find them!" he was saying to Mr. de Tankerville; who, presumably qualified for it by the French prefix and termination to his name, had been appointed to instruct the school in the French language; a tongue of which, where he was not ignorant of it, he altogether disapproved. But he disapproved still more of Mr. Chetham-Kitsey, though discipline forbade him to say so.

"Well, 'C-K,'" he replied, "if I were you, then, I should take a good run round the grounds, and a cold tub afterward, before the parents arrive." . . . It was his cure for all evils, mental, moral, and physical.

Mr. Chetham-Kitsey paid no attention to his advice, but continued: "Thank God, I haven't got to play this year! The old blighters have made up a full team for themselves. And anyhow I shouldn't be able to hit the damned ball, because I hurt my wrist yesterday, mashing two of their young hopefuls with a pencil-box. . . . It's often hard on the wrists."

Mr. Pollydore, the "Maths beak", Mr. Tallboy, History, and Mr. Pilliwink, Geography, were discussing together their approaching holiday, which was of course to be devoted to mountaineering in the Alps. The domination of Nature, their mastery over a mountain in the holidays, helped them, as did the Chapel here, to master themselves and their emotions.

"I must say, I'm longing to feel the rope round me again," Mr. Pilliwink confessed shyly.

Miss Makesweet, the matron, was busy grinding and mixing her powders in the Dispensary (she always wanted the boys to call it "the Boudoir", and herself, "a dame," as at Eton—it would sound so well—"just got to see m'dame for a moment in her boudoir." But Miss Prentiss-Pendergrass—jealousy again!—would not allow it). Her pharmacopœia, like that of nearly every school matron, was a purely

medieval one, showing an infinite variety within a very limited range. Her incomparable concoctions of gregory, rhubarb, and liquorice were works of art, never repeated twice and never forgotten, and she could distil the most improbable tinctures and potions of obsolete, dim drugs, that should, one felt, to savour their perfection, be drunk, as directed in medicinal recipes of the middle ages, to the croaking of toads at the time of the full moon. "Beastly irregular, the little brats are; worse than ever," she said to herself as, adding a few drops of water to some dust, apparently of volcanic origin, she reduced it to an evil-looking paste. "And that young monkey's eye is no better—letting the whole school down like that, in front of all the parents!" . . . Well, he'd regret it to-night, she thought, when she made him swallow the dreaded Black Draught! But that was a disciplinary, rather than curative, measure: for medicine, just medicine, give her powders any day!

Indeed Miss Makesweet possessed a touching and simple faith in them. . . . And they would be needed here after the great day. There was nothing like 'em for growing boys (or, as for that, for parents!). How she *longed* to administer some gregory and rhubarb to them, coming down and spoiling a lovely day like this, when she might have been bicycling over the Hog's Back all the afternoon with Mr. Pollydore! And "Is my little man all right now: you *will* take care of him, won't you?", and "Please make him change his shoes, if he gets them wet?", and "Will you ask the doctor to vet him every month?" and all those other idiotic inquiries and directions. . . . And she had to be there, waiting in attendance, the whole day, and even to answer them as if she were interested. Wasted hours, and nothing to show for them! "No jewellery, please, and a simple holland dress," Miss Prentiss-Pendergrass had commanded—just like Queen Elizabeth with Mary Queen of Scots: Couldn't stand a younger, better-looking woman within range. Well, it would make her wince, if she heard what Mr. Pollydore thought of her and her moonstones! A powder wouldn't do *her* any harm. . . . The gregory now: that was it. . . . But where was Sister Katherine? Why wasn't she *helping*, instead of running round, looking after the boys? *Playing with them* again, she supposed. . . . By the way she behaved, you'd think she liked them!

Downstairs the schoolrooms, each with an empty blackboard, and the library were deserted. The drawing-mistress, an Italian lady, was eating a "choc" in the Gymnasium. It had been lent her for the day by the Head Master, so that she could arrange a little hanging of her work, copies of famous Italian pictures, on the match-boarded wall opposite the window. (She gloried in her country, and in being able to spread its fame, and to help it after this manner. . . . Besides, the air of culture it conveyed must, undoubtedly, aid the school.) . . . Sometimes, the parents took a fancy to one; she set out some palettes and other

paraphernalia of her art, so as to make the paintings look as if they'd just been done—you know, fresh—the parents liked that. . . . There now, they looked quite nice! The Bernardo Daddi seemed to suit the parallel-bars: and the Botticellis always looked well anywhere! . . . But, Deeow Meeow! How she wished Mr. Kettelstring would stop it! He'd been organist for ten years, surely he might know that tune by now? "Alwise that blooming 'Rock of Iges'!"

Miss Prentiss-Pendergrass had just left the Conservatory and was walking towards the drawing-room. Concolorous, she was dressed in a gala gown of beige lace, which matched exactly her eyes and complexion, and the effect was completed by a large beige hat, with a beige ostrich feather running round the brim, under which showed a small, curly beige fringe. "She's such a pleasant-looking little woman, with her nice smile," the parents used to say, in order to damp unpleasant doubts, "not pretty exactly, perhaps, but such a *nice* way of showing her teeth, when she laughs." (Behind her back, the boys called her "Tusker".) She sported a small moonstone pendant, that seemed a solidified soapsud, and a small moonstone, on a small gold chain, tinkled from each ear. Diminutive moonstones and giant chrysanthemums were her signature-tune, her speciality, almost, you might say, what she lived for. (To have as many of them as you could possibly want, spelt wealth. They were nostalgic symbols, representing luxurious worlds of flowers and jewels, gentility and fashion, as well as the repressed heart-cry, "I'm as good as you are!" If she had a moonstone on her, it was a talisman equipping her to deal with any person or emergency.) Alas! it was not the season for chrysanthemums: indeed the Conservatory only contained, at this time, a wilting and scentless pale yellow rose crucified upon a trellis, and a quantity of involved, sore-looking foliage in hot reds and blues and greens and yellows. But, all the same, she liked the parents to enter from that direction (now, you never knew where they'd crop up next!) and walk through it. It always gave a good impression.

She proceeded to the dining-hall, to see for herself that everything was in order; a large panelled room, with a beamed ceiling, and monastic tables, on which, to-day, stood various silver cups, deformed and squat, each one the reward of a different unnatural agony and heart-strain—the "high-jump", the "long-jump", or the "hundred yards"—and, in fact, the solid guarantee of two or three years taken off the end of the life of the boy who won it. . . . Very nice everything looked, she thought, with the silver, and the ferns in green pottery stands. And she felt confident that luncheon to-day would be a success. She had cancelled the soup, made of shredded carrots, barley, egg-powder, and bovril, with a lot of pepper added to make it more "tasty"—a good, honest, nourishing broth it was, too, though some obstinate little boys refused to touch it—usually the first dish on Thursday, and



had substituted for it a dainty little recipe, of chopped ham, parsley, and potatoes, all minced and cooked together, with a little curry powder added, served in a scallop, with shrimp sauce all over it, and on the top, an anchovy, rolled up as though in a last paroxysm of ptomaine. She had found it, strongly recommended, in the "Home Cuisine" page of a ladies' paper, under the heading "French Food at Home", and it seemed just the thing for a hot day; not too heavy. . . . Of course it was an experiment: but she had explained it carefully, and it did not look too difficult. . . . And after that they were having chicken, with that nice gluey sauce (chicken impressed the parents) and lots of good trifles and jellies. You really couldn't do more. And Cook was very good at trifles, when she got the chance.

Miss Prentiss-Pendergrass retraced her steps, turning to the private part of the house again, and entered the drawing-room, a spacious gothic creation, with sham-stone walls, shiny, pale-brown, wooden rafters, and lots of little windows, very high up. There were ferns again, and silver vases, with a few bright coloured sweet peas struggling through a sort of mosquito-net of gypsophila, and photographs of parents, if of sufficient station, in silver frames, so as to make the place look "homey". And on one wall hung a small copy of the *Primavera*, presented by the drawing-mistress.

Mr. Prentiss-Pendergrass was waiting for her, as she had expected, for they always enjoyed a quiet talk before the fun began. He was one of those very fit-looking schoolmasters, without an ounce of superfluous flesh to him, grey-haired and grey-faced, and with very marked lines from nostril to mouth corner, who resemble an Alsatian—or, perhaps, a wolf. He could stand any amount of hardship, you would have said, but you would have been wrong: his appearance was most deceptive; he had been a keen and successful football-player, and had kept it up until rather late in life, so that he was now, at fifty-five, a victim of painful and severe heart-attacks, while a lifetime of school food, even in the slightly more palatable and healthy form in which it reached his table, had worked havoc with his digestion. In character, he was somewhat querulous, and always discovering that he had been "let down" by someone under him.

For weeks beforehand, brother and sister had been saying to each other continually, "I *do* hope we shall have a fine day this year for Paters' Match!": but, now the morning had arrived, they could not but regret the full measure, pressed down and overflowing, which had been meted out to them. (It was a mistake to *overdo* things: hardly gentleman-like.) Of course a fine day helped the school, but it was going to be *very* hot indeed, and the strain would be considerable. Nor was it so easy to be consistently agreeable to the one hundred and sixty parents odd, and to carry to each pair the conviction that their small and unattractive son, a single unit among eighty, occupied

a position in tutorial hearts different from that held by any of his schoolfellows. A few years before the war it had been easier to manage the paters and maters, because they all arrived by train in a herd, hot and tired out, and so you knew, more or less, where they were : but many of them now reached here on their own, by motor, fresh and quite undisciplined, trampled in from every possible direction, and brought down little brothers and sisters, and even friends, with them. Of course, they were obliged to announce in advance how many, because of the luncheon : but it made a great number to feed, even if, in the end, it always came out of the parents' pockets. . . . (That was one good thing about brothers, two or three, being at the school together ; they could only have *one* set of parents to look after.) . . . Perhaps in a few years' time, when the generation of war-babies began to go to school, with good fortune a falling-off would ensue in the number of male parents : already they were beginning to feel the effects. It might, even, Miss Prentiss-Pendergrass make a note, be worth while offering special terms to war-orphans. It would look well, and underline the patriotism of the establishment. . . . But even then there would be the mothers. And they were the worst of the lot, in her opinion, so full of confidences about their children, and liable to maddening bouts of intuition. (Look at Mrs. de Tryfling-Sedbury !) Give her the paters any day ! They had been to school themselves, were grateful for any little improvement they noticed, and knew, for the most part, what was what. . . . As for divorces, they were terrible. The amount of *parents* they made for a single child !

She sat down, and together they summed up the situation before them. . . . Where the little devils picked up these things they simply couldn't imagine. Astonishing ! But it was always the same story. However—they could be thankful that the epidemic of German measles had been a light one, the scarlet fever nothing at all (except for one boy, who, through his own carelessness and disobedience, had lost the sight of an eye) : both were finished a month ago. Ringworm was stationary. And the boys in general seemed to be getting over the effects of last term's whooping-cough more rapidly than usual. Unfortunately Pelling Major and Snouty Kendrix wheezed pretty badly still, and were both of them performing to-day : and, it being Paters' Match, they were sure to play up, and run as fast as they could, and that would inevitably bring it on ! You would hear them roaring, like anthracite stoves, all over the playing-fields. . . . Apart from this, however, the Head Master and his sister felt they could congratulate themselves : it was mid-July, nearly the end of the term, and only two epidemics—unless you counted ringworm ! Later on, of course, one must be prepared for a few mastoid cases (after some weeks of the swimming bath) : fortune favouring, however, those might develop at home, in the summer holidays : (illness at the end of the term was always a dreadful nuisance !)

But they must be grateful : so far, they had been wonderfully free ! . . . A knock at the door ! . . . For a moment they thought that it must be some careless parent arriving, but it was Cook, come to say that she'd run out of Eiffel Tower lemonade powder. What a moment to choose ! Why couldn't she have said so before ? They didn't want to give an idea of stinginess : they'd really let themselves go over the jelly-cubes on purpose, without a thought of the expense. . . . And now this would spoil everything ! Really, she possessed no mind at all ! . . . Another respite. . . . They continued their talk. Mr. Prentiss-Pendergrass walked to the single window which was on his level : from its thickly leaded panes he could see Bassett, the head gardener, crouching down on his short legs picking some roses. It recalled something to him.

"Naomi, don't forget, *will* you, to give Lord Chiselhurst a prod about those cuttings ? He's let us down badly, always promising them. It's hardly fair on Bassett."

"I'll try to remember, Norman, but there are *so* many things. . . . Mrs. Mompesson promised me the name of her little dressmaker. I thought I'd go to her for a gown."

"Oh, I *shouldn't* do *that* if I were you ! Her clothes may suit *her*, but they would look queer on you. I should ask Lady Liddelsby."

"But, dear, I don't want to look a frump. You wouldn't like *that*, would you ? . . . The Mompessons are quite my favourites, so jolly and whimsical, and no trouble. . . . And they've asked us to go up to London one night and 'do a show' with them ; we really must go. They know such nice people. Miss Marmaduke's a friend of theirs. . . . Perhaps we could persuade them to bring her down here for a concert ?"

"And that reminds me, Naomi : I hope you told Miss Makesweet to put some more pomade on Mompesson's eye last night ? . . . Boys never seem to get rid of their black eyes now. . . . I gave all the five who'd been teasing him a good whacking : but it does no good. . . . And though it was only a schoolboy rag, parents are so apt to misunderstand. Really sometimes I feel that they think we've got nothing to do, except to run round, looking after their children for them."

"That's exactly it. It often makes me quite angry when I think of it. . . . Yes, I told Miss Makesweet. But you know, she's *not* very trustworthy : I ought to have seen to it myself. She's *far* too good to the boys. . . . And at her age, she ought not to be behaving like that with Mr. Pollydore. It's not the thing."

"I'd better speak to *him* about it, I think, when I have a moment."

"And then, there's Sister Katherine. I've lost all patience with her. She's more of a hindrance than a help. . . . I didn't tell you at the time, because I was afraid it would annoy and worry you too much. . . . But you remember that last dormitory rag : in February, was it ?

... I know it took place after the first sing-song of the spring term, and Shirdell Major and his minor, and four other boys, undressed that resome little new boy, Simkins, and hung him out of window. . . . Well, of course, they *oughtn't* to have done it, and it was a cold night—but the way that girl petted and spoilt the boy afterward, almost encouraging him to be soft and a crock! . . . I blame myself for not having got rid of her then."

"It's terrible the way people who ought to help, and to take their share of responsibility, let one down. . . . Terrible!"

"Talking of that, there's another little matter on which I wanted to speak to you. I know this isn't the time to go over old differences—but, oh Norman, I'm worried about Mr. Chetham-Kitsey! . . . need not tell you again that I was always against your taking him to partnership: though at any rate, you couldn't have foreseen that a ex-Public School and Varsity man would let you down in *that* way.

. . . But that last hot '*half-hol*', he was *dreadful*: *reeked* of it, positively. And three of the visiting parents noticed something, to my knowledge."

"I thought he'd been so much better lately, dear? And he paid a great deal of money."

"No, worse, far worse! . . . And though I quite understand that discipline must be preserved, I don't like the *way* he chastises the boys. . . . Of course, *that* won't come out, boys never talk to their parents about that sort of thing. But if he gets into the same lamentable state to-day that he got into a fortnight ago, they'll see that for themselves. We can't blame them."

"The truth is, we can't depend on anyone here. . . ."

They were both quiet, their thoughts galloping away with them. . . . Running a school to-day was not all jam, by any means: even apart from the growing and exacting demands of the parents; (now the boys had to have baths three times a week, instead of once, as in his predecessor's time.) Take lectures, for example. . . . You had to have lectures, with lantern slides, once a fortnight, because all the other schools advertise them, and the parents expected it. Before the war, there had been easy enough; an endless supply of old, fringed clergymen with varying but unusual forms of impediment in their speech. Delightful, enjoyable lectures they had been: *and instructive*. Most of them seemed to be either about Palestine, an inexhaustible subject, or about the life history of birds (though one had to step carefully there—the boys knew nothing). Then there were such others as "Stonehenge and the Druids", followed a fortnight later by "The Influence of the Druids upon Modern England", "Highways and Byways in Western Torrahowoo"—by a former missionary—"The Fauna of the Greek Isles," "Handicraft in Tasmania," "Scouting in the Rockies," and many others. But the supply seemed to tide over the war, and then, quite suddenly, to dry up, in 1920, or thereabouts. . . . (Indeed, he

remembered the last one of that sort quite well. It had been an extraordinary incident. The usual lists had come in, the items already rather sparse, but he had been strongly attracted by the title of one, "The Great War in Song and Dance." He had expected a fine, stirring lecture. . . . Well, the ordinary kind of old clergyman had arrived, with a gentle manner, and an inability to pronounce certain letters. . . . They were disappointed when they found he had brought no slides with him. He never needed them, he said, but he'd brought a gramophone. Mr. Prentiss-Pendergrass had led him on to the platform always erected in the dining-room for these occasions, and had introduced him to the school in the usual way ; then, as soon as he'd got down, the old man had turned on the gramophone and had begun dancing to "It's a long, long way to Tipperary" and "Keep the Home Fires Burning", by himself, in the most singular manner : (how he could kick like that at his age, he couldn't imagine !). It had been a dreadful situation ! Of course the boys went mad about it, and even one or two of the masters had let him down. . . . And it had been with the greatest difficulty that they persuaded him to be led away, though they had succeeded eventually. . . . (Mental strain, the agency had explained afterward.) Yes, about 1920. . . . Dead, he supposed, and no one to take their place. . . . It had been quite awkward. . . .

As for concerts ; concerts were difficult, too. At one time, all the masters sang, bass or baritone. But now it was different. C.-K. had volunteered last term to give an imitation of Harry Lauder : and the boys had been wild about it beforehand, but he came on, and perpetrated a dreadful song, called "A Wee Doch and Doris". The parents had been shocked, and the whole thing had been a fiasco. . . . Far too realistic. . . . Of course, Tubby Pratt was a sport and could always be depended upon to play up, to sing "Wrap me up in my Cardigan jacket, and say an old buffer lies low, lies low" or "All the doo-dah-day !", but he wasn't by nature musical. You couldn't pretend he was. And Mr. Pilliwink was always longing to sing : but though possessed of a trained voice, he was, unfortunately, a natural soprano—and that didn't go down well with the parents either ; difficult to please.

Miss Prentiss-Pendergrass was thinking of a number of things, among which moonstones shone dully and chrysanthemums flowered perpetually. Day-dreams—but there were worries, lots of little worries, too. . . . Mr. Pollydore and Miss Makesweet : *disgraceful* ! . . . And Jeddleby minor had broken his plate : a great nuisance. The local dentist was a new one, and charged only forty-eight pounds instead of sixty, as formerly : it came to very little : but even then the parents grumbled. (And what was 5 per cent on £48 ? It was more difficult to work out.)

Mr. Prentiss-Pendergrass returned to the probing of the immediate future. "While I remember, Naomi, you must, of course, place the

Duke of Doreham on your right again at luncheon. . . . I remember overhearing your conversation with him last year : well, this time don't *always* agree with *everything* he says. Try, every now and then, to differ from him over the points he raises. It makes for good conversation : and also sounds better."

"All right, dear. . . . And, Norman, before they arrive : I forgot to say, this year don't stand any nonsense from Mrs. de Tryfling-Sedbury ; tell her, straight out to her face, that we don't believe in pampering the boys. And if she likes to take her child away, she's welcome. . . . And, oh, one thing more. I hope you've remembered to tell the masters to interfere *at once* if they hear the children discussing the food with their parents. It must be put a stop to. Last year, Christie-Coggins Minor said to his father in front of me (and I'd always rather liked that boy before), "I did enjoy that chicken, Dad. We only get that when you come down !". . . Exactly the sort of remark that gives a wrong impression of the place."

"Oh dear ! Naomi, here are some of them already (I hear them coming through the Conservatory), and it's barely eleven yet !"

"Well, Norman, I'll look after them alone for the first few minutes, if you'll run round and find Tubby. Tell him not to allow Mr. Chetham-Kitsey out of his sight *for a moment* : above all, not to let him go up to his bedroom alone. That's where he keeps it, I'm positive. . . . In that bureau, probably."

"My dear, it's too late. Here they are ! Stand by the door."

"*Lady Liddelsby, Miss.*"

(Miss Prentiss-Pendergrass wondered how many times she'd told Ethel not to say "Miss", like that ? She directed a reproving glance at her.)

"Dear Lady Liddelsby ! What a wonderful day you've brought down with you for us. . . . But you want to find that dear boy of yours, Peregrine, I'm sure you do—and not to stay talking to *us*. . . . I know what you parents are like ! . . . Oh, yes, he's *much* stronger, and loving it all."

"*Lord and Lady Chiselhurst.*" (That was better.)

"Dear Lady Chiselhurst . . . and *Lord* Chiselhurst. Well, it is nice to see you : we hardly thought *you'd* dare to come this year, Lord Chiselhurst, because of the gaps where you planned the peonies and roses for us. . . . You must make little Richard take you round the garden before the match begins."

"*Mrs. Christie-Coggins.*"

"Mrs. Christie-Coggins ; none the less welcome because unexpected. . . . You naughty thing, you never let us know. Well, it will be 'pot-luck', as they say ; but still, there is sure to be enough, and more than enough, for everyone. There always is, here. No, of course, rearranging one *whole* table is no trouble. . . . You *did* let me know ? Let me see. Well,

I don't remember receiving the letter. . . . No, I'm afraid the minor isn't *quite* so well as he has been : but it's only a summer cold."

"*The Duke and Duchess of Doreham, Miss.*" (Particularly irritating of Ethel !)

"*Dearest Duchess.* It is nice seeing you. What exquisite weather you've brought with you. Just what we've been praying for ! It makes such a difference to the look of the dear old place. . . . Yes, it is *rather* nice, isn't it ? You know, one can't help growing fond of it when one lives here : doesn't your Harry tell you that ? . . . Oh, yes, he's *much* better ; that funny old wheeze has nearly gone."

"Doreham set his face against it in the first place, Miss Prentiss-Pendergrass. He didn't want it doing at all. You see, we have nine daughters older than Harry, and he's our only boy, so of course his father thinks the world of him. . . . But I insisted. I said to him, 'Dor, that child's got *adenoids* : you know all your family have 'em, and he must have 'em out. It's the only thing to do. (Look how different your sisters would be !) And while they're about it, his tonsils had better come out too. They've a splendid new treatment now, I'm told, from Vienna : tear 'em out by the roots, instead of cutting. . . . That's why he's always ill, I'm sure of it. It ain't fair to blame the school, just because he's had scarlet fever, mumps, whooping cough, and mastoid all in a year. It's only what I expected."

"Dear Duchess, you're always so sweet. . . . But here is your little man : *doesn't* he look fit, don't you think ? "

"*Mrs. de Tryfling-Sedbury !*"

"Mrs. de Tryfling-Sedbury, how nice of you to come ! And you've brought a much better day, I'm glad to see, than you usually do ! . . . How is he ? . . . Oh, well, he's rather an old-fashioned little fellow, you know. But we're all of us trying to brisk him up a bit and make him more like other boys of his age.

"No, it's nothing. The doctor says he may just have to drill a teeny-weeny little hole, like that, through the cheek-bone, to drain the sinus : but the child doesn't seem to mind the idea, even. . . . All he said, when I told him, was to ask me how long he'd be allowed to stay in the sick-room ? . . . Yes, his work is all right, but he is no good at games. . . . And most people to-day think that's more important, don't they ? "

"*Mr. and Mrs. Mompesson.*"

"We are so glad to see you both down here. . . . This is your first experience of a Paters' Match, isn't it ? . . . But you're not playing, Mr. Mompesson : oh, you ought to ! . . . What a delicious little hat you're wearing, Mrs. Mompesson."

"Ah, Mrs. Mompesson, here's your Paul looking for you."

"Hullo Joanny, hullo Mumpy, how are you ? "

"Paul, but what *have* you done to your eye ? "

"I knew you'd ask that, Joanny. I only bumped it. It's nearly well now."

("Isn't it quaint, Duchess, the way that little chap calls his pater and mater by their christian names? I shouldn't like the whole school to do it, but it seems, somehow, to suit them, don't you think; *such* an attractive couple? Of course the other boys disapprove, they're always so strict in their views. They've found out, and you know what teases they are! Your Harry is one of the worst; a real little mohawk.")

Miss Prentiss-Pendergrass soon captured her favourite parent, and as they both stood at the edge of the lawn, their eyes dutifully on the game, she made conversation into Mrs. Mompesson's politely sympathetic ears.



## CORNET SOLO

By A. W. H. MACDONALD

"BETTER IF HE'D married a hactress," muttered Timothy to himself, or maybe to his cornet, or perhaps to the hurrying stream of folk that choked the pavement. For Timothy stood in the gutter—a very excellent place for broken-down, useless old men. Saran had called him an idle and dirty old man too. That rankled. From his youth up he had prided himself, not without cause, on his cleanliness and industry. Yet Saran had called him idle and dirty and godless. Hence, Timothy stood in the gutter gripping his battered old instrument in one hand while he slowly and painfully worked the fingers of the other. The external cold of the falling year and the internal cold of old age wrought together. The fingers that had so lightly twinkled on the keys of the cornet when the Works band was first formed were now gnarled and red and unresponsive. He was aware, too, that his tongue had lost its sprightliness. His lips were cracked. And worst of all, the blowing produced a nasty dull lumpy ache under his ribs. His head ached. It came upon him slowly that blowing a cornet was no occupation for an old man. He looked down at his instrument. It had cost him a lot of money. It was a good cornet, with scrolls and chasing on the bell of it, and valves and springs in perfect order still. Dents, it is true, marred the symmetry of its tubing. Each had its history. Each recalled for Timothy some incident of their joint career. The latest was the most shameful of them all, caused by Saran snatching it from his hand and slinging it out of doors. Timothy passed his free hand gently over the mark. Yes, the cornet was still good. It was he, Timothy, who was no good. He had failed his instrument. It was the end.

Standing in the gutter, with the impatient wind of autumn plucking at the skirts of his ancient coat, he reviewed their history. At the beginning, Timothy had been foreman joiner at the Works, a keen sprightly young man with a good job and some spare time. He had been one of the founders of the Works band. Oh, it had been good to be young and well set up and wear a uniform more brilliant than any field-marshal and play the solo part in the *Miserere* from *II Trovatore* in the Park on a Sunday afternoon. The conductor—Mr. Mousewick, out of the Office—had rather advanced ideas. Timothy had played his solo from behind a hedge some distance from the bandstand. He lived again his quick important progress to his post in the preceding interval. How the people had looked! And Jenny most of all. Jenny had been so proud of him—and the cornet. She had been behind the hedge with him when he played his solo. Memories swept vividly upon him—the heat of the summer afternoon, the stiffness of the high collar of his uniform, the dry taste of the dust churned up by countless feet—

and Jenny's kiss still freshly moist on his lips as he walked back to receive a special ovation. They were married soon afterwards, Jenny and Timothy. All the bandsmen had been at the wedding. Again he stood in the little porch of the church with Jenny on his arm, blinking rather as he came out of the gloom. Between them and the carriage—of course they had a carriage on *that* day—an archway of instruments. Two of the fellows had even held up the bass drum!

And then the day when the band had won the championship! A day to remember if you like! Of course, Jenny was there. She accompanied him to all the band's engagements. She had a knack of keeping both little Arthur and Joey quiet during the performance, no mean feat, the lively little rascals. And now Joey—well, there was no Joey. Only somewhere abroad where Timothy had never been able to go there was a cross, and a name on a war memorial. That had finished Jenny. That and air raids and poor food and worry. The wind blew sharply round the corner and got in Timothy's eyes. He had to wipe them slowly with his cuff. And then he had to move along because, as his eyes cleared, he saw a policeman coming. Tucking the cornet under his arm, he stepped on to the pavement. He pulled the collar of his coat a little closer round his neck and pulled the brim of his old bowler hat, that emblem of respectability, a little further down. He wondered if it would be worth trying the High Road. A lot of traffic, he reflected, and trams clanging behind his back. Must make an effort though. So far he hadn't earned a single copper. Even an old man must eat a little. And sleep. Somewhere warm and dry and cosy, not in a draughty mews. A man never gets too old for a smoke, either. But eating came first. Soon Timothy would be eligible for the Old Age Pension. Perhaps, he thought wistfully, Saran wouldn't be quite so hard on him when he could contribute again to the family's income. Perhaps he would be able to endure her sharpness and dislike. Why, he wondered, did steady young fellows like Arthur have to go and marry spitfires like Saran? A little corner, warm and dry, and a bite to eat, and the cornet. That was all he would ever need. The warmth and food to keep him going a little longer, as long as might be, and the cornet to keep alive his memories of the old happy days when life was strong and bright and desirable.

The War had been the worst time really, despite the high wages he had earned. He had worked long hours. The boys had been away, and Jenny had bought a beautiful piano which she had never played. At the last, he, too, had been "called up". And then the War was finished and Jenny and Joey were gone—pouf—like that. They had never been. Arthur had married Saran—"Sara Ann" it was written in the marriage lines,—and to them Timothy had turned. Arthur had been out of work for a long time after he came out of the Army. Such a shame and he such a fine strapping fellow. There hadn't been much

cornet in those days. Not for years after Jenny had—had left him, had he so much as fitted its mouthpiece. Timothy had worked all day and come home quietly at night and sat by the fire. Only, sometimes, he would take the old instrument from its case and handle it, just to make sure of the old days. Wages had come down with a run. Still he had helped the young couple as much as possible. His savings had dwindled. Then the Works had closed down, and for the first time in his life Timothy had had the sack. Saran hadn't been able to conceal a sadistic delight. She had always resented his being in work while her own man was out. She had always been derisive of the reasons he had given for being unable to make a job for his son.

"You'll have to go and play your cornet up the gutter," she had sneered, and added sharply, "And take your feet off my clean fender."

Arthur had sat slumped in his chair, never daring to say a word. It was awful to see a woman so hard and clean and spiteful as Saran. Saran went to Chapel. Not that it seemed to do her much good, or Arthur either. She had been a "twicer" at one time, but latterly had fallen to one attendance per Sunday. Somehow, the blame for that seemed to rest on Timothy. Some women were like that. It was better to say nothing for the sake of peace and quiet. And yet, there had been a little warmth and a bite to eat, while now Timothy was cold and hungry. A long, cold, dreadful winter stretched before him. He knew, he *knew* that he would not survive unless he could contrive a little comfort for himself. And his respectable artisan soul revolted at the thought of dying carelessly in the gutter. Of course, there was always the Workhouse—Institution they called it now, a place of horror, the shadow of which had haunted his early life. It wasn't such a bad place, he had heard. Still, it was the Workhouse. And then a worse thought rushed at him. Suppose he were to collapse in the street. Where would they rush him off to? Why, the Workhouse, of course.

The thought still clung to him as he turned into the High Road. It unnerved him. He wandered on with the cornet under his arm. Of course, he had been wrong to go off like that. No, he hadn't though! What would any man do—a man who called himself a man—if his son's wife snatched his cornet from his hand and flung it out into the backyard? Why, he'd do what Timothy had done, quietly go and pick the cornet up, gather his few belongings and leave the house.

That had been three months ago. High summer and the countryside had called him. For him the ripening crops had danced, the birds had trilled, and the tall trees swayed protectingly, urging him along the enticing highway. He had managed fairly well, gaining a meal here and a few coppers there. As often as not, he had slept under the sky. After a lifetime at the bench he had seen the countryside with an old man's beauty-eager eye. He had been free. He had had adventures, long

talks by the wayside, occasional lifts in motor-cars. It had been enjoyable, this old man's Odyssey. But like so much else, it was ended. Autumn had found him in the town. And so he was shouldering slowly along the High Road of this big strange place, tragically aware that his Odyssey was ended, that he needed food and rest and comfort, and that there was none to be had save at the Workhouse.

He took the first turn out of the High Road. Its bustle confused him and left him panting. The street into which he turned was one of those nondescript, untidy little thoroughfares that seem inevitably attached to High Roads. But it offered, almost at its threshold, as it were, a large high step on which Timothy could sit and rest a little. Rest was so precious, so necessary—and so great a luxury. A group of unwashed urchins came and gravely regarded the old man. They had a mean, pinched look that accorded with the street. Little bodies that should have been so pink and tender peeped yellowly from their scanty clothes. Timothy's children had never been like that—thank God. From some recess of his clothes he slowly produced a large and sadly soiled red handkerchief and blew his nose and wiped the moisture from his eyes. That done, he fell to fondling the cornet on his knee. He even rubbed it a little with the handkerchief in a vain effort to restore the splendour of its polish. The children still watched his halting movements as the wind, rushing beneath a sullen sky, brought down a few drops of icy, stinging rain.

"Run away home, there's good chicks," admonished Timothy.

Across the way from Timothy's seat was a mean little doorway with a swing door polished by the friction of many hands and little bundles. Every few moments the door would open and a woman emerge. They looked neither to right nor left, these women, but hurried away. Sometimes a woman would saunter up with a bundle half concealed beneath her apron. Timothy knew very little, at first hand, about pawnshops. He watched the women going in and out and wondered about them,—what they had in the bundles, what they got for the contents, what their husbands were doing, and a lot of things like that. It took his mind off his own troubles.

But something had to be done. Perhaps now he was rested he could make another effort. His gaze wandered from the three brass balls of the pawnshop down to his cornet and back again. A thought was born in his mind and grew and grew. It was a grey thought, like the street and the day and the pawnshop door and his old coat and his stubbly beard and his eyes. After all, he had failed his cornet, he was past playing it. Saran, perhaps, wouldn't be so hard on him without the cornet. He thought of the chair by the fire that had been his. What would he get for the cornet? Enough to buy a meal, a little meal and his fare back to Saran? Yes, probably. It would only amount to a few shillings anyway.

He struggled to his feet. The rain now fell with purpose, making the grey street shine. His mind was made up. He would pawn his cornet and creep back to Saran on the proceeds. He shuffled to the edge of the pavement. He was ashamed. Yet, what else was there but the Workhouse? And there they would take away his cornet and make him a pauper. Emotions he could neither disentangle nor master held him at the pavement's edge. One last farewell effort? He held the cornet carefully and wetted his lips. Then down the mean little street sounded, feebly and unmusically, the notes of Verdi's great love song. In spirit, Timothy gave of his best. But the performance was ragged. Often he could not attain the right note. Once or twice he made terribly queer noises that Mr. Mouswick (out of the Office) wouldn't have liked at all. The wind tore away the notes, good and bad, and whirled them over the housetops—anywhere. But Timothy stood again behind the hedge with Jenny. He felt again the warmth of the summer afternoon and the sweet comfort of her presence, while the rain collected in the brim of his hat, ran down, and spilled over his hands.

Breathless, dazed, warmer than he had been for days, he took the cornet reluctantly from his lips. He gazed round once, half hopeful that even yet . . . Then the urgent need for rest overtook him. Just a little rest before he crossed the road. Swaying, he achieved the high step again, and sank down slowly, gratefully. . . . The raindrops splashed from the bell of the cornet as the grip of the gnarled fingers slowly tightened.

# THE SEA AND ITS SHORE

By ELIZABETH BISHOP

ONCE, ON ONE of our large public beaches, a man was appointed to keep the sand free from papers. For this purpose he was given a stick, or staff, with a long, polished wire nail set in the end.

Since he worked only at night, when the beach was deserted, he was also given a lantern to carry.

The rest of his equipment consisted of a big wire basket to burn the papers in, a box of matches for setting fire to them, and a house.

This house was very interesting. It was of wood, with a pitched roof, about 4 by 4 by 6 feet, set on pegs stuck in the sand. There was no window, no door set in the door-frame, and nothing at all inside. There was not even a broom, so that occasionally our friend would get down on his knees and with his hands brush out the sand he had tracked in.

When the wind along the beach became too strong or too cold, or when he was tired, or when he wanted to read, he sat in the house. He either let his legs hang over the door-sill, or doubled them up under him inside.

As a house, it was more like an idea of a "house", than a real one. It could have stood at either end of a scale of ideas of houses. It could have been a child's perfect play-house, or an adult's ideal house—since everything that makes most houses nuisances had been done away with.

It was a shelter, but not for living in, for thinking in. It was, to the ordinary house, what the ceremonial thinking-cap is to the ordinary hat.

Of course, according to the laws of nature, a beach should be able to keep itself clean, as cats do. We have all observed :

"The moving waters at their priestlike task  
Of pure ablution round earth's human shore."

But the tempo of modern life is too rapid. Our presses turn out too much paper covered with print, which somehow makes its way to our seas and their shores, for nature to take care of herself.

So Mr. Boomer, Edwin Boomer, might almost have been said to have joined the "priesthood".

Every night he walked back and forth for a distance of over a mile, in the dark, with his lantern and his stick, and a potato sack on his back to put the papers in—a picturesque sight, in some ways like a Rembrandt.

Edwin Boomer lived the most literary life possible. No poet, novelist,

or critic, even one who bends over his desk for eight hours a day, could imagine the intensity of his concentration on the life of letters.

His head, in the small cloud of light made by his lantern, was constantly bent forward, while his eyes searched the sand, or studied the pages and fragment of paper that he found.

He read constantly. His shoulders were rounded, and he had been forced to start wearing glasses shortly after undertaking his duties.

Papers that did not look interesting at first glance he threw into his bag; those he wanted to study he stuffed into his pockets. Later he smoothed them out on the floor of the house.

Because of such necessity for discrimination, he had grown to be an excellent judge.

Sometimes he transfixed one worthless or unprinted paper after another on the nail, until it was full from what might be called the hilt to the point. Then it resembled one of those pieces of office equipment that used to be seen on the desks of careless business men and doctors. Sometimes he would put a match to this file of papers and walk along with it upraised like a torch, as if they were his paid bills, or like one of those fiery meat dishes called kababs, served in Russian or Syrian restaurants.

Besides reading and such possibilities of fitful illumination, papers, particularly newspapers, had other uses. He could put them under his coat in the winter, to help keep out the cold wind from the sea. In the same season he could spread several layers of them over the floor of the house, for the same reason. Somewhere in his extensive reading he had learned that the ink used in printing newspapers makes them valuable for destroying odours; but he could think of no use to himself in that.

He was acquainted with all qualities of paper in all stages of soddenness and dryness. Wet newspaper became only slightly translucent. It stuck to his foot or hand, and rather than tearing, it slowly separated in shreds in a way he found rather sickening.

If really sea-soaked, it could be made into balls or other shapes. Once or twice when drunk (Boomer usually came to work that way several times a week), he had attempted a little rough modelling. But as soon as the busts and animals he made had dried out, he burned them, too.

Newspaper turned yellow quickly, even after a day's exposure. Sometimes he found one of the day before yesterday that had been dropped carelessly, half folded, half crumpled. Holding it up to the lantern he noticed, even before the wars and murders, effects of yellowed corners on white pages, and outer pages contrasting with inner ones. Very old papers became almost the colour of the sand.

On nights that Boomer was most drunk, the sea was of gasoline, terribly dangerous. He glanced at it fearfully over his shoulder between

every sentence he read, and built his fire far back on the beach. It was brilliant, oily, and explosive. He was foolish enough then to think that it might ignite and destroy his only means of making a living.

On windy nights it was harder to clean up the beach, and at such times Boomer was more like a hunter than a collector.

But the flight of the papers was an interesting thing to watch. He had made many careful comparisons between them and the birds that occasionally flew within range of the lantern.

A bird, of course, inspired by a brain, by long tradition, by a desire that could often be understood to reach some place or obtain something, flew in a line, or a series of curves that were part of a line. One could tell the difference between its methodical flights to obtain something and its flights for show.

But the papers had no discernible goal, no brain, no feeling of race or group. They soared up, fell down, could not decide, hesitated, subsided, flew straight to their doom in the sea, or turned over in mid-air to collapse on the sand without another motion.

If any manner was their favourite, it seemed to be an oblique one, slipping sidewise.

They made more subtle use of air-currents and yielded to them more whimsically than the often pig-headed birds. They were not proud of their tricks, either, but seemed unconscious of the bravery, the ignorance, they displayed, and of Boomer, waiting to catch them on the sharpened nail.

The fold in the middle of large news sheets acted as a kind of spine, but the wings were not co-ordinated. Tabloids flew slightly better than full-sized sheets. Small rumbled scraps were most fantastic.

Some nights the air seemed full of them. To Boomer's drunken vision the letters appeared to fly from the pages. He raised his lantern and staff and ran waving his arms, headlines and sentences streaming around him, like a man shooing a flock of pigeons.

When he pinned them through with the nail, he thought of the Ancient Mariner and the Albatross, for, of course, he had run across that threatening poem many times.

He accomplished most on windless nights, when he might have several hours of early morning left for himself. He arranged himself cross-legged in the house and hung the lantern on a nail he had driven at the right height. The splintery walls glistened and the tiny place became quite warm.

His studies could be divided into three groups, and he himself classified them mentally in this way.

First, and most numerous: everything that seemed to be about himself, his occupation in life, and any instructions or warnings that referred to it.

Second: the stories about other people that caught his fancy,



whose careers he followed from day to day in newspapers and fragments of books and letters; and whose further adventures he was always watching out for.

Third: the items he could not understand at all, that bewildered him completely but at the same time interested him so much that he saved them to read. These he tried, almost frantically, to fit into first one, then the other, of the two categories.

We give a few examples from each of the groups.

From the first: "The Exercitant will benefit all the more, the more he secludes himself from all friends and acquaintances and from all earthly solicitude, for example, by moving from the house in which he dwelt, and taking another house or room, that there he may abide in all possible privacy . . . (obliterated) he comes to use his natural faculties more freely in diligently searching for that he so much desires."

That certainly was plain enough.

This was the type of warning that worried him: "The habit of perusing periodical works may properly be added to Averrhoe's catalogue of ANTI-MNEMONICS, or weakeners of the memory. Also 'eating of unripe fruit; gazing on the clouds and on movable things suspended in the air; (that would apply) riding among a multitude of camels; frequent laughter; (no) listening to a series of jests and anecdotes; the habit of reading tombstones in churchyards, etc.'" (And these last night.)

From the second category: "She slept about two hours and returned to her place in the hole, carrying with her an American flag, which she placed beside her. Her husband has brought her meals out to her and she announced that she intends to sit in the hole until the Public Social Service Company abandons the idea of setting a pole there."

Boomer wondered about this lady for two nights. On the third he found this, which seemed, to his way of looking at things, to clarify the situation a little further. It was part of a page from a book, whereas the first item was a bit of newspaper.

"Her ladyship's assumption was that she kept, at every moment of her life, every advantage—it made her beautifully soft, very nearly generous; so she didn't distinguish the little protuberant eyes of smaller social insects, often endowed with such range, from . . ."

It might be two nights more, or two weeks, however, before he would find the next step in this particular sequence.

Among the third group, of things that fascinated but puzzled, Boomer saved such odds and ends as this: (a small, untorn slip of pink paper).

"JOKE SPECS WITH SHIFTING EYES. Put on the spectacles and place the mouthpiece in the mouth. Blow in air intermittently; the eyes and eye-brows will then be raised and lowered. The movement can be

effected quickly or slowly according to what joke effect it is desired to obtain. If the ear pieces are too short in case of a large head bend the curved portion behind the ear. Celluloid is inflammable ! Consequently do not bring your spectacles near a naked flame ! ! ”

This would seem properly to belong to the set of warnings referring to himself. But if he was able to heed the last warning, there was much in the earlier instructions that he could not understand.

And this, written in pencil on letter-paper, blurred but readable :

“ I wasn’t feeling well over my teeth, and I had three large ones taken out, for they made me nervous and sick sometime, and this is, the reason I couldn’t send in my lesson although I am thinking of being able to write like all the Authors, for I believe that is more in my mind than any other kind of work, for I am concentrating on the lessons, frequently, many times.

“ Mr. Margolies, I am thinking of how those Authors write such long stories of 60,000 or 100,000 words in those magazines, and where do they get their imagination and the material.

“ I would be very pleased to write such stories as those Writers.”

Although Boomer had no such childish desire, he felt that the question posed was one having something to do with his own way of life ; it might almost be addressed to him as well as to the unknown Mr. Margolies. But what was the answer ? The more papers he picked up and the more he read, the less he felt he understood. In a sense he depended on “ their imagination ”, and was even its slave, but at the same time he thought of it as a kind of disease.

We shall give one more of our friend’s self-riddles. It was this, in muddy type on very old, brown paper : (he made no distinction between the bewilderments of prose and those of poetry).

“ Much as a one-eyed room, hung all with night,  
Only that side, which adverse to the eye  
Gives but one narrow passage to the light,  
Is spread with some white shining tapestry,  
An hundred shapes that through the flit airs stray,  
Rush boldly in, crowding that narrow way ;  
And on that bright-faced wall obscurely dancing play.”

That sounded like something he had experienced. First his house seemed to him to be the “ one-eyed room, hung all with night ”, and then it was his whole life at night on the shore. First the papers blowing in the air, then what was printed on them, were the “ hundred shapes ”.

Should we explain that by the time he was ready to start reading Boomer was usually not very drunk ? The alcohol had worn off. He still felt isolated and self-important, but unnaturally wide-awake.

But what did these things mean ?

Either because of the insect-armies of type so constantly besieging his eyes, or because it was really so, the world, the whole world he saw, came before many years to seem printed, too.

Boomer held up the lantern and watched a sandpiper rushing distractedly this way and that.

It looked, to his strained eyesight, like a point of punctuation against the "rounded, rolling waves". It left fine prints with its feet. Its feathers were speckled; and especially on the narrow hems of the wings appeared marks that looked as if they might be letters, if only he could get close enough to read them.

Sometimes the people who frequented the beach in the day time, whom he never saw, felt inclined to write in the sand. Boomer, on his part, thought that erasing these writings was probably included in his duties, too. Lowering the lantern, he carefully scuffed out "Francis Xavier School", "Lillian", "What the Hell".

The sand itself, if he picked some of it up and held it close to one eye, looked a little like printed paper, ground up or chewed.

But the best part of the long studious nights was when he had cleared up the allotted area and was ready to set fire to the paper jammed in the wire basket.

His forehead already felt hot, from drink or from reading so much, but he stood as near as he could to the feverish heat of the burning paper, and noticed eagerly each detail of the incineration.

The flame walked up a stretch of paper evenly, not hurriedly, and after a second the black paper turned under or over. It fell twisting into shapes that sometimes resembled beautiful wrought-iron work, but afterwards they dropped apart at a breath.

Large flakes of blackened paper, still sparkling red at the edges, flew into the sky. While his eyes could follow them he had never seen such clever, quivering manœuvres.

Then there were left frail sheets of ashes, as white as the original paper, and soft to the touch, or a bundle of grey feathers like a guinea-hen's.

But the point was that everything had to be burned at last. All, all had to be burned, even bewildering scraps that he had carried with him for weeks or months. Burning paper was his occupation, by which he made his living, but over and above that, he could not allow his pockets to become too full, or his house to become littered.

Although he enjoyed the fire, Edwin Boomer did not enjoy its inevitability. Let us leave him in his house, at four one morning, his reading selected, the conflagration all over, the lantern shining clearly. It is an extremely picturesque scene, in some ways like a Rembrandt, but in many ways not.

# THE SEVEN AGES OF MAN

## (A PUPPET PLAY)

By MONTAGU SLATER

### CHARACTERS

MAN	40
INFANT	2
STEPMOTHER	30
FAT WOMAN	50
GIRL	25
YOUTH	18
GRANDAD	80

*The yard of a workman's cottage. On the left a sunflower, on the right, in the distance, a mill chimney. The man is discovered sitting, the infant staggering.*

MAN

Says Joan t'owd man on a hot Friday night  
Tha mun go into't yard and mind thi own brat.  
If thou had to work as heavy as me  
Tha'd know why tha says I age faster'n thee.  
So t'owd man he sat on his bum with his brat  
And says, Let's have a good think.

There's cheatin in life : when man's brisk in his day  
T'owd woman for spite begins to decay—*As the child falls*

Nay lad, shut up, tha's come to no harm  
Now shut thi row and I'll tell thee a yarn.  
Tha feels a bit dull when tha plays by thisel.  
. . . Eh, thinkin's for them as as wealth.

*He sings rocking the child in his arms*

Tha's welcome here thou bonny brid  
But shouldn't ha come when tha did  
Times are bad  
But that o' course tha didn't know,  
So hunch up close, I'll help thee grow  
I'm thi dad.

I've often heard me father tell  
As when I came in't world mysel  
Trade were slack.

Tha knows it's hard work pullin through  
 But I wean't scare thee. If I do  
 Tha'll go back.

*The infant is asleep. An outbreak of quarrelling wakes him*

Now such a clatter comes about  
 One missis chasing t'other out

*Enter stepmother followed by Fat Woman, both shouting*

(to stepmother)

It's thy barn as I've put to sleep.

STEPMOTHER

And thine 'ud make pawnbroker weep—  
 Comes home wi no rent—all't money spent,  
 Blewed it on wench next door.

You Mrs. Black !

FAT WOMAN

You Mrs. White !

STEPMOTHER

Thou should be shamed

FAT WOMAN

I'm that all right

If you're my partner.

STEPMOTHER

Your daughter wean't

She's old enough to be his aunt !

Seducin children !

FAT WOMAN

Found in't midden !

MAN

Tak barn and send lad here.

STEPMOTHER

Nay that I'll not. I'll see him mon

Or ye'll egg yananither on.

FAT WOMAN

As soon be a slut as a naggin wife.

STEPMOTHER

Ay ? Jealous since tha's botched thi life.

FAT WOMAN

Tha's a sweet liar.

STEPMOTHER

Tha's a hoor.

MAN

Nay tak brat. He's got to learn.

*Exeunt stepmother with infant, followed by Fat Woman. Music. The girl comes in. The man does not turn round at first. After two steps of a dance he sees her.*

MAN

What's doin here ?

GIRL

Come to see thee.

MAN

Thou ?

GIRL

Ay.

MAN

Come to see me ?

Is't about yon lad ?

GIRL

About thisel.

MAN

If I weren't wed already ye'd do very well.

Tha's young lass.

GIRL

Ay, and the years go by

And I nivver find yan good enough.

MAN

Nay lass thou—is a good lookin lass  
There's mony a lad would turn out his brass  
And tie himsel up for the look o thy feace.

GIRL

I'm twenty-four and I ne'er had a kuss.

MAN

Tha's a fibber lass.

GIRL

Nay.

MAN

Ne'er a one in play ?

GIRL

Ay, laakin but that doesn't count.

MAN

Eh lass I'm a mon o past thirty-eight  
And well nigh settled in't married state  
Tha mustn't tempt me.

GIRL

What's tha mean by tempt

I'm nobbut conversin wi thee like a friend.

MAN

Tha knows lass in't ageing the fire is raging  
The more cos it's soon to be quenched.

GIRL (*breaks into the song*)

Then the little maid she said, your fire may warm the bed  
But what shall we do for to eat?  
Will the flames you're only rich in, light a fire in the kitchen  
Or the little god of love turn the spit?

MAN

That's a song and a bit.

GIRL

It's a nursery rhyme.

MAN

T'young uns don't twig what they miss at the time.  
If tha's such a lass, shall I be behind?  
I'll sing thee a song right to thi own mind.  
Sithee, look in my feace, I'll not gi thee a kuss  
But I'll sing thee a song at's as good.

(*sings*)

When he came there he knocked at the door  
And Nancy come out as you may be sure  
"Put thi horse in't stable as thou'st done before  
And come and sit down by me as we'n done before  
To my own mind."

"I've hens and I've cocks and I've rappits and ducks  
Beside gold and silver tho havena got much.  
I've as much as five pounds when a' is made reet  
Besides I can weave half a piece in a week  
To my own mind."

They talked it all over till break of day  
He said "I'll go home" shoo said "Go thi way.  
If thou'd done as I'd had thi, my heart thou'd ha won  
But now tha'art as fur off as t'were when begun,  
'To my own mind.'"

GIRL

A sly song mister, what's it mean?  
Did shoo want kussin to begin  
Before they talked the money over?

MAN

Tha's actin gawmless.

GIRL

Did he love her?

MAN

Tha knows what's more.

GIRL

What thi sing it for ?

Had tha summit i' mind ?

MAN

Gie us a dance.

GIRL

A clog dance ?

MAN

Nay.

Clogs were for work and tha's for play.

GIRL

What if thi son should see us now ?

MAN

Dance on lass and shut thi row.

GIRL

What if my mother come ?

MAN

Dance on.

Tha's safer at dancin than some.

*The son enters. The dance stops awkwardly*

MAN

Eh lad ? Tha knaws we're only laakin.

SON

I know folks sing what they don't like speakin.

*As the girl turns*

Thee ?

GIRL

Thou peepin—!

SON

Call me that. . . .

GIRL

Nay but I called thi nothin yet.

SON

Wilta get out ?

GIRL

Wi thee about

I'd best be out o't way.

*Exit*

MAN

Nay lad, there isna need to cry.

BOY

Who's cryin then ?



MAN

Tha's got a weak eye.

BOY

Tha's got a weak brain.

MAN

It's my moral sense  
Exhausted wi countin my shillings and pence.  
She's a bitch lad, and thou—too young for to know  
How complicate beauties are made.

BOY

When I was a kid I cried for the moon.  
Now I know I cried too soon.  
It's not the moon you ought to wail for  
But lack in yourself and your own failure.  
You look in the glass and see your own face—  
And keep your tears to yourself.

MAN

Nay lad, what's all this onyway?  
Lad, there's a peck o good in thee.  
When green melancholy comes  
Nay lad nay—stick up thi thumbs!  
For tha's got the looks, and tha's got the guts  
To win thiself owt that thi wants.

BOY

Owt I want? What's that? If ever I knew  
What I want I'd know what to do.  
I still hold back and the twilight fetches  
A longing for love and a fear of the wenches.

MAN

Hang on to yoursel, it'll all come out well—  
Tha's in love but tha don't know with who.

BOY

I'm eighteen and time goes so quickly for me  
I'm off down to Liverpool, going to sea.  
I'll find out the world. Here nobbut a slave  
I'll be sacked when I qualify for a man's wage.

MAN

Nay lad, tha naws, as nobody goes  
To sea for adventure these days.

Nay lad, all that drinking and swearing and thinking  
Excited your blood till you're sweating and blinking.  
Nay lad, cool thee down now, come whistle wi me  
As "I care for nowt and the dule cares for me".

We whistle and grizzle, we fry and we frizzle—  
Eh lad—and then we grow up.

*The boy begins to do physical jerks that develop into a dance.*

That's it lad, that's it lad, get muscled and warm  
In time tha'll be glad for the strength of thi arm.  
Eh youth is a time of slackening and tightening,  
It's still a game, still a game, when comes to fighting.

*The stepmother has entered unobserved*

STEPMOTHER

And John Thomas Smith, if tha wean't come to grief  
Tha'll pack up and put thi to bed.

*The boy goes out when he sees her. She makes as if to follow*

MAN

Owd woman art going? These neets are still growing  
So warm and so long, if tha stays I'll be showing  
Thee how to find Orion, Plough and North Star  
Milky Way and yon Pleiads, where they all are.

WOMAN

I'd be a fool master to take thee for schoolmaster  
If tha's sense tha'll come up to bed.

*Exit*

MAN

Owd woman art going, the neets are still growin  
So warm and so long if tha stays I'll be showing

*The girl re-enters*

Thee how to find Orion, Plough and North Star  
Milky Way and yon Pleiads, where they all are.

GIRL (*behind him*)

I'm waiting to hear thee make it all clear  
For I can see nowt but a moon.

MAN

Tha's a disturbing influence.

GIRL

Tha'll go to bed if tha's got any sense.

MAN

If I haven't what then?

GIRL

Tha'll sing me a song.

MAN

The second to-neet?

GIRL

It needn't be long.

MAN

Sing to't moon?

GIRL

It'll keep thee in tune.

MAN

And after that ?

GIRL

Maybe we'll see.

MAN (*sings*)

There was a lad from out of Rochdale  
Whose face made film stars discontented  
Took out Bob's wife to tell the tale  
And when he whispered she consented.  
But to be short  
As these songs ought  
He used her well when he came with her  
And played his part with such an art  
She could not keep her lips together.

When her husband he heard tell  
Of her tricks from her relations  
He would grumble to himsel  
Very sad, in such a fashion  
Saying "I'd give twenty pound  
That's ten more than I had with her  
If her ma would take her back  
And make her keep her lips together."

*During the song the Fat Woman has come in behind him*

FAT WOMAN

Ay? If them's the sort of songs  
Tha sings to this yan, tha belongs  
Yonder wi't second wife my friend.

MAN

Nay, nay old woman, tha'll unbend  
Thisel for once, then tha'll ha sense.

FAT WOMAN

Summat breaks whenever I bend.

Mister, tha's got a pretty barn.

MAN

What's that to thee, three ton o'charm ?

FAT WOMAN

Nowt. And tha'd a first wife too  
As gave thee a lad as is eighteen now.  
Tha's a busy mon.

MAN

Ay. I like to get on.

FAT WOMAN

Ay ? At some other's expense.

If thou and I had a drink together  
That would be more the kind o' weather  
For old uns like us.

MAN

Eh speak for yoursel.

FAT WOMAN

Ay I do that, an I drink very well  
I've known myself laugh for an hour and a half  
But I never did that before fifty.

Nay lad, tha's too worried.

MAN

Me worried ?

FAT WOMAN

Ay

I see it all in thi worried blue eye.  
Tha's like bakin powder eatin its way  
Through flour till its riz.

*The girl tiptoes out*

MAN

If tha has to say

Any more o that sort I'll take thee to court.

FAT WOMAN

Nay lad thou'll but join in and laugh.

See t'lass has gone home. Her sense is to come  
She'll get it in bed wi first barn.  
At first she'll grow thinner wi barn drinking dinner—  
After fourth she'll grow fat and laugh.

An I can see in front o't moon  
Thi daft old grandad has come down  
I'm off cos t'owd man's silly talking  
Shrivels me flesh and stops me laughing.  
Thi grandad's coming, coming now.  
Good neet lad, bed time for us a'.

*Exit Fat Woman, enter Grandad*

MAN

What is it grandad ? Has't new moon  
Waked thee out o bed too soon ?  
Or asta never been in p'raps  
Sat all neet mumblin at thi chaps ?

GRANDAD (*chanting*)

Boys and girls come out to play  
T'moon is shining bright as day

MAN

Nay grandad—eh—what is it now?

GRANDAD

Leave your supper, leave your sleep  
Join your playmates in the street.

MAN

Grandad come and sit by me

GRANDAD

In the madness of the moon  
Playmates of the second noon  
Meet the enemy in your shoes  
By the mirror introduced.

One in bed and fast asleep  
While the other in the street  
(The moon sweating hot as day)  
Supperless is tired of play.

MAN

Tha's a wise man grandad, tha's read books,  
Tha seest cause wherever tha looks  
Tell me grandad dost know why  
Men get moidered by t'moon in't sky?

GRANDAD

Because it's dead lad and it stays,  
Because a ghost's a mirror face.

Boys and girls come out to play  
T'moon is shining bright as day  
Leave your supper leave your sleep  
Join your playmates in the street.

*A song is heard, off*

All in this pleasant morning together come are we  
For summer springs so fresh green gay  
We'll tell you of a blossom that buds on every tree  
Drawing near to this morning of May.

GRANDAD

Yon's t' May carol singers.

MAN

Nay. It's wireless.

*Song off continues*

Rise up the mistress of this house with babe upon your breast  
For summer springs so fresh green gay  
And if your body be asleep we hope your soul has rest  
Drawing near to this morning of May.

Rise up you little children and stand all in a row  
 For summer springs so fresh green gay  
 We should have called you one by one but your names we do not know  
 Drawing near to this morning of May.

Rise up the fair maid of this house put on your gay attire  
 For summer springs so fresh green gay  
 And bring us out a can of beer and we'll sing an octave higher  
 Drawing near to this morning of May.

So now we're going to leave you in peace and plenty here  
 For summer springs so fresh green gay  
 We shall not sing you May again until another year  
 For to draw these cold winters away.

## ANOTHER VOICE

You have been listening to the sponsored broadcast  
 of Brightlings brittle biscuits for better babies.  
 You are now going to hear some gramophone records.

## MAN

Sitha grandad there's summat to beat  
 You an me settin in't yard th'whole neet.  
 And't moon comes up and t'moon goes down  
 And now it's day and work's to be done.

*Sirens begin to blow and the Boy, the Girl, the Fat Woman, cross on  
 their way to work.*

## BOY

T'moon comes up and t'moon goes down  
 And sirens blow and work's to be done.  
 And why they call this blinkin thing  
 A siren's because of the tune it sings.

## GIRL

Come to me and be at rest  
 And if you come you'll likely be lost.

## FAT WOMAN

These are sirens because they call  
 Men and women into the mill.

## MAN

Men and women and children—eh  
 Tha sees nowt else, and every day  
 Sirens play t'same old tunes  
 Men grow backwards and women have barns.

*They have all gone to work. Grandad goes into the house.*

CURTAIN

# A NOTE ON MOZART

By ERIC WALTER WHITE

FOR ALL ITS apparent simplicity and deceptive ease, Mozart's music, as players and conductors soon realize, is extraordinarily difficult to perform adequately. It needs perfect control and feeling if it is not to lose its golden proportions. The listener, who is at first enraptured by the immediate appeal of its obvious beauty, soon realizes that he is in the presence of a rare miracle : here is a composer who composes musically, whose habit of thought as revealed by his compositions is completely uncontaminated by the dross of extra-musical considerations—hence the almost continuous spiritual clarity that informs nearly all his work. It is not that his music is far removed from life and exists in a rarified atmosphere on some higher plane, a mystery only to be revealed to the initiated. Nor is it a class music, created under the patronage system and appealing only to the rich and privileged intelligentsia. It is a sign of Mozart's greatness as a musician and a man that he elected unquestioningly to work to such a scale that the proportions of his music bear the same relation as those of the Parthenon, for instance, to the ordinary human norm. He was not the man to strain after the heroic, the *Ueberschönlich*, like too many of his less fortunate successors.

The public often wants music to act as a stimulant or a drug, but rarely wants it to satisfy ; and satisfaction (not satiation) is the dominant emotion left by Mozart. This implies that the work heard has not only stated a problem in musical terms, but has also solved it, so that when the last chord has been played, the equation has been completed. As far as an intelligent audience is concerned, this is the perfect form of mental recreation.

One of the healthiest signs of musical life in England to-day is the fact that people are once more beginning to feel the need for Mozart. For instance, five of his operas are now performed more or less regularly and under ideal conditions at Glyndebourne ; and the success of that enterprise makes it possible, at least, that at some future date we may also hear trifles like " Der Schauspieldirektor " and the *opere serie*, " Idomeneo " and " La Clemenza di Tito ". Native opera companies which do not wish to perform the operas in the original Italian or German have the inestimable advantage of Professor E. J. Dent's brilliant translations, which not only give a faithful rendering of the spirit of the original librettos, but also show consummate discretion in their phrasing and vowel-grouping. The prejudices of nineteenth-century critics against the librettos of Mozart's operas are gradually breaking down. It is at least generally realized that " Don Giovanni "

is what Mozart himself called it, a *dramma giocoso*, and it is played accordingly with the final sextet as written for the first performance at Prague. And now that "Così Fan Tutte" has at last become familiar to the musical public, da Ponte's libretto is seen to be almost perfect of its kind and absolutely undeserving of all the blind strictures that have been passed on it by critics who found its plot artificial and improbable.

This season a group of musicians who love Mozart have embarked on a bold but well justified experiment. Like many other people, they have long felt that the performance of Mozart's works has of recent years been unnecessarily confined to a familiar but restricted round of operas, symphonies, quartets, etc. This stock repertory may possibly include Mozart's most characteristic works and represent the best of his output ; but that does not alter the fact that meanwhile hundreds of his compositions are unjustly neglected and never performed at all. It is well known that Köchel's catalogue runs to 626 entries ; and Einstein's recent revision has done nothing to affect this total. A series of concerts of Mozart's more unfamiliar works is being given at the Cambridge Theatre. The programmes include many of the less well-known concertos, some of the earlier serenades, and works like the *Maurerische Trauermusik*, which fall into no well defined category. Such enterprise deserves success ; and to everyone's astonishment and delight the first two concerts have been sold out. Should this series be continued next year, it is to be hoped that other compositions which are off the beaten track will be revived. To take a dip at random, one would suggest more of the masonic music, the delicious *commedia dell'arte* Pantomime for strings (K. 446), and the various works for mechanical organ and glass harmonica, in particular the quintet for glass harmonica, oboe, flute, viola, and cello (K. 617). The piano transcriptions of the compositions for clockwork instruments are most tantalizing ; and it would certainly be a revelation to hear what they sound like in their original setting. A strong plea might also be entered for some of the earlier church music, which usually antagonizes Protestant listeners because of its fine rococo fervour.



## NOTES ON THE NEWS-REEL

By CHARLES GRINLEY

THE NEWS-REEL has five units devoted to it in this country. It appears twice a week. On special occasions "flash editions" are sent out, followed by longer versions. It has its own ways of getting the pictures, and its own ways of delivering them. It has its own theatres and its own public. During the last few years the issues at stake in world-events have made that public increasingly news-minded. The news-reel has become news.

Events that empty ordinary cinemas, such as a big fight or Jubilee, fill the news-theatres. For this box-office privilege, the news-reel pays. If its pictures fail to do justice to a happening, as many thought the Coronation films failed, there is an outcry. If they do more than justice, as some thought the reel of King Alexander's assassination did, there is an outcry. Recently Paramount and Universal were so impressed with their respective reels of the war in the East that they did not censor them. This was found surprising and, in some quarters, outrageous; Mr. Jeffrey Bernerd, of Gaumont-British News (which did not have so full a record), stated: "I disagree entirely with Mr. Cummins, editor of Paramount News. . . . The exhibitors of this country run their theatres with the idea of entertaining the public. To show the ghastly destruction of human beings in the most horrific form is, I contend, letting down the exhibitor."

The remarkable thing about this seems to me not that the pictures were uncut but that it created comment that they were. Indirectly it is thereby admitted that we have become used to news-reels being deleted or doctored. Film-fan and film-maker have for long boasted that one of the cinema's gifts was that it allowed us to see, with the vividness of visual impact, what was actually happening. Yet now it has become remarkable if a news-reel shows what the camera took. For this reason it is high time that this product of what is still sometimes called the candid camera should be considered in some detail. News-films have been with us from the very start of moving pictures, but, as far as I know, their history as a separate branch of the cinema has never been traced.

I make no claim to be a historian. I am doing no more than providing some notes on the news-reel. I hope their incompleteness may be atoned for by their topicality—and that word may well serve as a starting-point.

NEWS-REELS were the first films. Though they were not called that, there they were—rough sea at Dover, boot-black in the street, and the

famous train which ran towards the audience (in consequence panic-struck). These were actual happenings and it may be remarked in passing that the French still call the news-reel *actualités*. Other early news-reels were the Corbett-Fitzsimmons fight, the Diamond Jubilee of Victoria, her funeral, and that of President McKinley in 1901. Not long after, Cherry Kearton was filming London from an airship, Tolstoi was "turned on" and pictures of George the Fifth's coronation were shown that same night in Paris. In those days, if my memory is not at fault, the reels most familiar to filmgoers were Pathé Pictorial and the Topical Budget. Since Pathé was French, it perhaps followed that fashion played a prominent part. Certainly no less well-known than Bunny and lamblike Little Mary were those rather liverish-looking ladies who displayed hats, as I see them now, too big for their heads in dresses too tight for their busts. The "tints" were usually watered pink and the kind of uncompromising green in which railings are painted. The ladies manoeuvred on to a set fraught with palms, one would sit down at the same time skilfully opening her coat. As soon as seated, she would arise—because the other had walked in front of her, as likely as not twirling a parasol. In revenge for this, the first lady, with an air of abandon, would either remove eight hatpins very fast or slowly revolve her head, thus showing that whereas her colleague undoubtedly had bats in the belfry, she herself had a couple more bird-wings on her own brim than anyone else could support. In which she was right. . . .

These tarnished ladies, with the sickly smiles, were the forerunners of the bathing mannequins and Miss Day of Judgment who now "crash" the cinemagazines. Let it be noticed that as the "budget" developed, it split into sections, the cinemazine, the news-reel, the instructional, and, later, the documentary. But already there was evident the format and make-up which militated against the true reporting of news. True news-reporting does not consist only of presenting facts. It consists of presenting them so that they make their full impression. In a reel of five items, you can present appalling shots of an earthquake. But you can make it seem unimportant, even irrelevant, by glossing it over and surrounding it with four others of, say, a cricket match, Ascot, a ceremonial parade, a royal drive.

I criticize the news-reel, for I think their editors do not fulfil their responsibilities as journalists, as do editors of newspapers. Heaven knows there are enough editors apparently unaware of any save that of pleasing the boss who sets circulation figures. But there are others, and that gives not only respect but variety to the press. I do not find that variety in the news-reels. We know the reason. It's the audience. That, of course, is to say the picture people's idea of the audience. I'd bet a Mickey to a Movietone that they still refer to a married woman who has children as "materfamilias"—and materfamilias has to have

her item. She has, say, the Duchess of Hog's Norton at a bazaar, or scenes at a poultry show; something to appeal to her shopping instincts. Paterfamilias likes to remember his young days, so we have a beauty parade (commentary—"bird show of another kind, let's hope they ARE kind"), and a sport item. Pater-to-be is still interested in sport, so we have a bit more, and as the "rising generation" is mechanically-minded, we have airplanes or cars. The young man's girl has to be considered (that's why he bought two seats)—she gets a giggly bit about sun-bathing or "Eskimo Eve chews Greenland Gable's shoe-leather". Then, to encourage all of them, there's another military parade or "naval occasion", it doesn't matter which, so long as the male can feel he's one of the men and the females can impose on their own man their fantasy-thrill from the others, while bands blare over the whole show.

There's your reel. And there it has to be, because the cinema caters to that audience. Say it shouldn't. But that's its audience; in press-terms, its "readers". Now, in fiction films, you find a different type of audience for Arliss, Dietrich, Spencer Tracy. Each appeals to a different section of the public. You'll get people who stay away from a cinema if Shirley Temple or Cagney is showing. But you don't get people staying away from a news-reel because it contains a crêche item or dirt-track scenes. They may complain after. They do. The news-reel answers back by putting in a little to please in case a little should annoy. It plays Safety First—that's the joke—while it's meant to be showing the world to-day.

THE NEWS-REEL'S political or propagandist aspect is patent. Certain reels are under the control of those from whom unbiassed news is hardly to be expected. For varying reasons, different news-reels stress different sides of human activity. Mr. Sanger, of British Movietone, has answered the criticism that his reel concentrates unduly on sport and militarism with the reply that these are two of the subjects richest in that movement which is the essence of movie. Not much of an answer, you may think—hunger marches have as much movement as an inspection—but it's safe (for the time being), and news-reels play for safety, and we might as well admit that the editors of the news-reels know, probably, more about their audiences than you or I. Political considerations apart, it isn't just chance that the "gazette" has to try, in its limited compass, to be all things to all men—and women. It has to remember not only our Alf, who's paid for his Maisie's seat, but the mood he wants Maisie to be in afterwards. It has to remember that maybe Alf's dad and mum have gone out, so as to leave the parlour free, and it has to remember that there are lots of Alfs without a Maisie and vice versa. It has to remember such a hell of a lot that you can't blame it if a little matter like the world outside

gets left—well, outside. For the news-reel, on the whole, and with notable exceptions, can't show us the world as it is. For one reason. It is coming to terms with the world as congregated in cinemas.

NO NEWS-REEL has yet had the courage to set up as the equivalent of a Liberal or Labour twopenny daily. With the exception of Paramount, the only reel to cover Mosley's East End March, none have the courage to be a little more complete or considered in what they chronicle than the rest. Now that the news-reel is news, it is essential that it should wake up to the sense of duty which has, believe it or not, for long animated the better sections of the press. When we see how little effect that has we must agree with someone roughly like Nurse Cavell and say even the best is not enough.

In the beginning, it may have been. But now we have to admit that the only way to achieve what is good it to change the standards of what was once certified best. At the start, news-film, like any other movie, had the advantage of novel presenting of new matter. Like any other unfair advantage too ruthlessly used, that balloon has been popped. The news-public has got back to the first simplicity of expecting a news-film to be news with a capital "N". The news-film-folk don't know it, won't admit it, or must not. But the result is that all the terrific costs of covering, cameraing, commentating, developing, dispatching, directing a news-reel are, in final effect, nullified by *The March of Time* which sets out to be not topical but contemporaneously historical, reminding that history, like Anna Neagle, marches on.

THE NEWS-REEL is carried a step farther by *The March of Time*. We may remark that this particular reel would be nowhere if it hadn't had the cuteness to nip in, mouse-like, on the cheese of documentary, just as documentary learnt how to get the gruyère from the double-teethed trap of "news" and "interest" cinema.

Theoretically, I am taking no sides, I am merely observing that the result of more than thirty odd years of news-reel reporting has resulted in some clever guys realizing that there is enough news *not* reported to make it worth while reconstructing some. I say nothing against *The March of Time*, which has given us adequately interesting and informative screen-articles on many subjects of which it is essential to know. I am grateful for much knowledge of Hawaii, Colonel la Rocque, the Irish Free State, China, the Western Plains. *March of Time* may be okay. But supposing there were a *Mark Time o' Time*?

THE NEWS-REEL has won great facilities for reporting major events. Its power to preserve for posterity is recognized by authorities. Yet it has been beaten at its own game. On paper, the news-reel exists

to show what happened at the time and in the place at which it happened. Experience has taught us that, in fact, we only see, first, what the sponsors wish, secondly, what the cameramen are there to record. We know by now that a commentary can tip the scales, as witness the American film, *The Dead March*. Banned by the English censor in its original anti-war version, it is passed with a new commentary which gives a new angle to the shots, and creates the effect of a recruiting picture. We know what happened about the film of Alexander's assassination, why the *Krassin* pictures were withdrawn, why the Windsor wedding was not shown in this country.

We know, in fact, what's behind the news. So the news-reel isn't news, but a screen in front of it. *Just when the news-reel is, journalistically, most "news"*. We've got used to that happening in the worse sections of the press. But the dopey quality of screen-entertainment (and the screen is still assumed to provide that more than information) prevents the majority from observing that it is happening in the cinema. I am reminded of the patient who refuses food through the ordinary channels and is too exhausted by his effort to notice his involuntary assimilation by injection.

THE NEWS-REEL "lasts", as they say, for a quarter of an hour. I may seem to overrate its importance. But look at the effect it has had on every form of film, not excluding the fictional—after all what else is *Victoria the Great* but nostalgic news-reel in reverse? The early "budget" or "gazette" incorporated "interest" shots. Peeps at distant lands, and birds on nests crystallized into travelogue (Fox's *Magic Carpet*, Fitzpatrick's *Travel Talks*), and scientific film (*Secrets of Life*, etc.). When both of these grew—by reason of their acceptance in the news-reel—they left it. They became the documentary. The hen-on-nest became Buy British Eggs. The travelogue, either a pamphlet for cruises or ballyhoo for the Empire. *This is why the Strand has Bananas*. Substitute tea, coffee, stamp-paper, or anything else that happens to be sponsored. For though the documentarian claims directness and facts without fiction, the fact remains that he is liable to be as much at the mercy of his financiers as other film-makers. The difference up-to-date—and thank God it is a big difference—is that he usually believes in the propaganda of his bosses, or else finds it so weak, he can turn it to his own uses.

The result of this freedom has been many admirable films. They have brought a new light into the cinema. And a new life. They have resulted in several of the more prominent documentarians being hauled, not unwillingly, to America. They have in part produced—I really don't think it's unfair to say this—those "commercial" Hollywood pictures such as *Fury*, *Crime Doesn't Pay*, *Zola*, *Pasteur*, *They Won't Forget*, etc., as it seems, *ad lib*. Between writing, I have seen the

American documentaries shown at the Paris exhibition—even London appears to have room for *Land Without Bread*, *Millions of Us*, *The World To-day*, which are American “social problem” pictures. Commercial films (Fidelity) produce pictures on *Kew Gardens* and *Danger at Sea*, a survey of the English lighthouse system. Even now, Gaumont British Instructional produce fifty pictures a year. There are the *Three-Minute* series of Zenifilm, the shorts of Painlevé, and many others. There are also such compositions as *Forgotten Men*, *The World In Revolt*, and all the rest in which old news-items have been used in conjunction with recent, usually retrogressive, sound-tracks. It can be argued that these have nothing to do with the news-reel, because they’re documentary. That is a favourite argument. It is also my own best answer. That answer is—the documentary, the travelogue, the interest, and the instructional, as opposed to scientific or purely educational, film developed from the news-reel. It was bound to develop. So was the news-reel. But that didn’t develop as much as its offshoots. The Gas Light and Coke Company make a film on the question of *Nutrition*, a subject of national importance. They follow it with one on *Children at School*. Hounded news-reel editors may remind me that these films are not for commercial distribution. I reply, that is the fault of the news-reels. These are their subjects and they either ban or ignore them. It remains for a business undertaking not specifically concerned with either film or feeding to step in.

There should be no need for them to step in. I am not being rude to Gas Light and Coke. I admire and am vociferously grateful. I merely point out that their films stand out because they deal with things that are “news”. It is news, say what you like, if forty million people in the United Kingdom are below par on diet. It is news, like it or not, to know that one teacher has to control, let alone instruct, a class of fifty children—for whom both lavatories and heating are inadequate.

These things are not stated so forcibly in the news-reels. Life as seen by “the eyes and ears of the world” is a series of parades—mannequin, military, monarchic. The Pope and Perry. New Pier at Folkestone, Old Pier in New York, Marlene Dietrich says “Nuts”, Pet Monkey beats her by Three Syllables, and so on. The great proportion of important events are not recorded, or at most given cursory notice. So for all its apparent “service”, the news-reel isn’t giving us the real news. A pity. But it is more a pity that, in consequence, audiences don’t give the news-reel the whole of their attention. They drop in, notice the items they want, doze through the rest. They don’t study how it is put together or what outlook it expresses. And so, by degrees, slogans can be dinned into the audiences’ ears till they become familiar with them, the first step towards accepting them. A viewpoint can be presented until it seems the natural one. Subtly,

the propaganda of the news-reel can sink in—without anyone asking whose propaganda it is.

During elections we have seen the screen used by politicians. Do we imagine that's the only time they are the voice behind the screen? *The Gap*, that air defence film which told us where we got off if we didn't join the Territorials, is only one film of news-interest made by the National Government as propaganda. The implications are obvious.

All right if you like that. All right if you don't; you can't do anything about it. But realize what isn't done. Realize what is done. And realize what might be done in the way of nose-leading public opinion during what are politely referred to as "times of emergency".

THE NEWS-REEL has, therefore, led to the reconstructed news-reel. It must be admitted as a joke that the re-enactment of events should produce an impression nearer the truth than that given by screen-reporting. What conclusion is reached? "The governments of the world know that with the movie you can propagandize and persuade and, perhaps even more important, you can distract attention away from what is significant and towards all that is trivial. What will happen from the desire *not* to please but to propagandize the people? . . . We have to face the possibility that the moving picture . . . may even cease to be a form of entertainment (Gilbert Seldes, *Movies for the Millions*, Batsford, 7s. 6d.).

But I think that years hence it will be found very entertaining—when more is known of the world to-day than we may now know—to look at the news-reel of to-day. The news-reels will seem the comics, and it will be the Marx Brother films that seem more truthful, less distorted in their picture of a civilization which has found ways of preserving everything but itself.

## CINE SYMPHONY

By ROBERT HERRING

THEY PASS ACROSS the screen—Dietrich, MacDonald, Crawford, Loy, Carroll—decked out in, or decking, “vehicles” of the usual unusual expense. And what is the result of this parade, so like that with which certain Disneys end? A star is born—and it isn’t Janet Gaynor. The star is Queen Victoria.

If you wish to see how it is that a real person and not a star has become the new star of the movies, consider more closely the parade. Why is it that Dietrich seems tiresome, that there is too much MacDonald in *The Firefly*, that Crawford makes us see red, that, to take one among many pictures, *The Prisoner of Zenda* never comes to life? Is it not because we know too much of the film-stars’ lives? If we are film fans, we read the movie-magazines, telling us not about their pictures, but about their parties, their polo-ponies, their perfumes, about anything personal so long as it’s printable. If we are critics, we are deluged weekly with sheets from the publicity-departments, studio chit-chat about the plans, perfumes, parties, polo-ponies of their players. If we are neither critics nor fans, we read of these people, their parties etc., in our newspapers. I know myself how many stars it has lately been my business to see on their arrival in or departure from this country—because what they say, do, wear, buy, is news.

In consequence, we the public have a more complete idea of the star as person than their performances enable us to have of them as actor. I will not say that their lives are more real to us. I mean that we have a clearer idea, or illusion, of those lives, whether they seem real or not. Joan Crawford works hard to produce the illusion which she wishes her public to consider her off-screen personality. By comparison, her performances are colourless. Dietrich seems to have worked far harder in her various London appearances than she appears to have done in *Knight Without Armour*. And so with most of them, until the picture of the star we have off-screen dims the image of the parts which she creates on-screen. To clarify an earlier statement, the lives of the players have been made out to be too fantastic, too glamorous. Their films cannot keep up with them. Player and part have changed places; the humdrum player no longer becomes vital under the spell of the lines and the lights. The dazzling player becomes humdrum when called upon to perform. This has resulted in two trends in the movies. Pictures such as *Prisoner of Zenda* and *Knight Without Armour* will, presumably, always be made. But that will be not because there is anything right with them, but because those who should be responsible don’t know what is wrong. The appeal of these pictures lessens—so they make them longer and



larger. While they are doing this, other producers have, fortunately, made pictures on other lines. The first is the crazy comedy, started by *Mr. Deeds* and still going strong. As I write, the latest examples are the Loy-Powell *Double Wedding*, and the amusing *Topper*. These films set out to be funny and as wit and convention aren't usually found together, they kick over the traces, leap barriers of accepted behaviour—are "crazy". Let us admit that they often succeed. I myself enjoyed *Topper* considerably and I still gratefully remember the slapstick ending of *Double Wedding*. But supposing I didn't feel like that about these two films? It wouldn't have mattered. The new style of comedy isn't trying to be "real", so if you don't accept it, it doesn't matter. These new comedies, welcome as they are, are really fright-mechanism at work, a having it both ways, aiming at fantasy because they aren't certain of creating, or even of recognizing and reproducing, reality. Of the other kind, we have the social-problem film, which now comes from Hollywood in increasing numbers. It is a good sign, a step forward which allows us to have unusually sincere, sometimes cynical, pictures such as *Marked Woman*, *They Won't Forget*, *Zola*, etc. Even *Exclusive*, though ridiculous when trying to be realistic, had its social message, as it tried to teach the American film-public the difference between white and yellow journalism. A few years ago you wouldn't have had producers making a picture of the uncompromising grimness of *They Won't Forget* (First National, directed by Mervyn LeRoy).

In the cinema you don't find people taking risks when things are going well. Generally, if they are making a lot of money, they want to go on making it, they don't want to risk losing some of it. They will only do that when they are losing, anyway. Progress by reaction. Once upon a time the tinsel-drama was a change from peoples' lives. It had "glamour". The stars, as purveyors of those machine-made never-never one-dimensional stories, had to have "glamour" too. In case they didn't put over enough in the films, they put out stories of how much they had out of them, too. The glamour-business, not to mention its imitation, became so much a part of many people's knowledge that it lost its glamour, became everyday—and people were willing to look at stories of reality. It cannot be said that they are welcomed with reckless enthusiasm; but at least the public has learnt to respect serious films, and to allow room for them. The stories must now be completely crazy, or they must deal with something of actual importance. Even a musical will take in a story of the oil-pioneers; Mamoulian's *High, Wide and Handsome* does not push song and dance into a pioneer tale; it tries to let song and dance arise naturally out of that story. Whether it succeeds or not, the attempt is a sign of the times.

That is why, ladies and gentlemen, they mean so little as they pass before you, bowing, mouthing, under-acting, overdressing. Here at

the end of the parade are two new characters . . . you will remember that, when Disney grows tired of a character or when the public's conception of it cramps him, he invents another and gives the old a different role. Thus Donald Duck was born, and Mickey changed. . . . Here now are Janet Gaynor and Queen Victoria. I am not saying "Anna Neagle as Queen Victoria", because that is not what counts. Giving due credit for the hard work done by her in the Wilcox film, it is not the actress who is the star in any picture with Queen Victoria, but the Queen. So now let us look at these pictures. They have this in common—they are both peeps-behind-the-scenes, the one into the life of a film-star, the other into the life of a queen.

Take first *A Star is Born*. You must discount the fact that Janet Gaynor should not be in this story of a girl making good in Hollywood. Janet Gaynor herself made good so long ago that this film is hailed as a triumphant come-back for her. But Hollywood doesn't think of letting a young girl play a young girl, and so Janet Gaynor, a slipping star, is called in to depict a rising star. Two points about this; first, she plays a new kind of role, as if Minnie had got away from Minnie Mouse parts. Secondly, this picture cleverly gets the best of both worlds by steering a middle-course between crazy comedy and social problem. It knows that you have only to show Hollywood even roughly as it is to have something crazy, even if it is not in all eyes a comedy. On the other hand, by depicting Hollywood, it cashes in on the taste for reality. In which latter respect it beats the film-stars at their own game.

Of *Victoria the Great*, the striking thing is that it is not, despite the programme, Anna Neagle as Victoria, but Victoria "portrayed" by Anna Neagle. In other words, we have returned to the part being more important than the player. At first, of course, there is bound to be curiosity as to how Miss Neagle acquits herself; this would be true of any actress, and it may be said that there are many who could have been more physically similar. But finally, the film resolves into a series of episodes in the life of the Queen. This isn't a film of history, but a film of a woman who has become, in the film-makers' eyes, framed in history. That needn't worry us. We are given what is the official view. Later, we may be given other views. There can be little doubt that Victoria as a star is a great discovery. She must surely have come to stay, for you can do so much with her life-story.

You need not, perhaps, do as much as Herbert Wilcox has tried to do—put the whole of it into one film. I shall never understand why a director, faced with one of the longest reigns in history, should have imagined he could put all of it into a two hours' picture. Naturally, whilst the novelty of representation is still a box-office factor, the chance for a *tour-de-force* of ageing make-up is not to be lost. It is nearly lost here, because it should have been better and, at the end, when

the last reel blazes into Technicolor, we realize with a shock that no one at the studio appears to have known the colour of the Queen's complexion. Apart from that, a far better picture, both of Victoria and of her times, could have been made by taking one section of her reign, following (if asked for) with another (Johnny Weissmuller, Maureen O'Sullivan, Warner Oland, and William Powell repeat their rôles). There was more to Victoria's reign than that she was crowned, married, and had an unusually large family and unusually long reign. There was more happening in England than was going on in Buckingham Palace, and more was going on even there than is suggested by this film. You don't deal with the condition of the working-classes by having Victoria murmur over the poor as she reads Dickens, then rise, go to the window, and say "Dear me, there they are." And if you wish to remind us of inventions, whilst at the same time concentrating on one person, you can do more for the woman who was the first monarch to be filmed, recorded, to speak on the telephone, and to use chloroform, than pick on a photograph album. You can do a lot with this reign, even if you concentrate on the Queen (flood-light the figure-head, as it were, and let the rest of the ship go hang). You can show her greatness, how, when, and if. This picture does many things, but not that. Greatness doesn't come into it. You can tell that by the title. They put "great" into that, assuming that since she is great, peeps into her life will be of interest. They are confident of that because Victoria is the new star. She has everything the stars were losing—both glamour and reality. They have let themselves become too real, and so the way is left for an actual person to become a star. No actress can change her now, I think. It is all set, the voice, the lines, the black dress, and white cap, which present us, when all is said and done, with a conception that can only be called the Nippy of the British Lion, devoted to the cause of Service. . . .

Disney must change his title, for the film world's borrowed it. A silly symphony it is, passing in strange parade, Dietrich in her train, MacDonald trilling in her coach, Sonja Henje on skates, Sabu on his elephant, William Powell in his trailer and, at the end, with Janet Gaynor as usher, and presided over perhaps by the ghost of Connie Bennett, the Queen (God Bless Her) in her jubilee coach, so *very* gratified, so gaudily coloured but every *inch* (and here, too many of them) a queen—thereby being not an impersonation, not as that a symbol simply; but the satisfaction of the need which caused men to invent, first royalty, then stars, and now, in life as on the screen, to combine the two, to be, which is all these can be—the façade behind which we dare look, in order to know there is nothing to fear.

## REVIEWS OF RELEASES

THE LAST NIGHT. (Zarevski-Surkova-Shironov Production, Moscow. Direction : Yu. Raizman. Scenario : Yu. Raizman and E. Gabrilovitch. Photography : D. Feldman. Film Society. New Gallery.)

THE NIGHT IN question is the one before the Revolution in Moscow and not all your *Mayerlings*, *Zolas*, or time-pieces have better captured the sense of a past period. Here more difficult to catch because it was passing. The story, of conflicted loyalties, includes working brother in love with bourgeois daughter of his father's capitalist employer and many others. The story, brilliantly though it is done, does not matter as much as the psychic grasp the director displays handling it. Acting and scenario are as fine as one expects from the better Soviet films. Sentiment, still unself-conscious, is thereby straight, and since the audiences for whom this is intended are not literate, *The Last Night* is not a literate film. The movement, the light values, the changing compositions, are of film in film, whilst the dramatic unity and design of this film are further claims on attention.

THE LIFE OF ÉMILE ZOLA. (First National. Carlton. Directed by William Dieterle. With Paul Muni, Vladimir Sokoloff, Joseph Schildkraut, Gale Sondergaard, etc.)

THE PHRASE "TYPICAL Hollywood" will soon have a new meaning, if California continues to be more interested in those who made history than in monarchs. This is not, to me, a sufficiently passionate film. I regret the fact that anti-semitism is glossed over, and the alteration of facts, so as to make Zola live four years longer than he did, does not improve on the ending furnished by life (Zola did not live to see the complete re-instatement of Dreyfus, who was fired on when escorting the author's body to the Panthéon. The culprit was acquitted on the grounds that it was a pardonable gesture). I must also admit that I am in a minority as to the merits of Muni. These criticisms do not alter the fact that *Zola* is an outstanding film, sincere and serious. There is appreciation both of events and of atmosphere in every scene and William Dieterle has in the main directed brilliantly but unobtrusively. It should, as I say, have had more force, and might well have been truer. But when we consider this, and *Pasteur*, and other biographical films, it is heartening to realize the improvement since the days of *Disraeli*.

THE EDGE OF THE WORLD. (Studio One. Produced by Joe Rock. Story and Direction by Michael Powell. Camera : Ernest Palmer. With Finlay Currie, Niall MacGinnis, George Summers, Grant Sutherland, Kitty Kirwan, John Laurie, Eric Berry, Belle

Crystall, Campbell Robson, the women of the Glasgow Orpheus Choir, and "all the people of the island of Foula".)

It is a pleasure to greet a film which so blithely does nearly all the things which the Colne-bound British cinema has neglected. Now and again, there crops up a film so real that it doesn't matter what a critic says. This is one. There is plenty to say, for and against; mainly for, but not entirely. Belle Crystall's eyebrows were something I should not be asked to forgive; Niall MacGinnis had a certain self-consciousness in some shots which worried chiefly because it suggested that the director either hadn't broken in his actor-material or else was being misplacedly, if pardonably, dramatic. After all, you can't make a film on Foula, about Foula, without wanting to emphasize in your way what Nature, meaning time, and weather and place, has done already in hers, theirs. The marvel is, Michael Powell didn't do it more, especially as he is Irish. The fact is, however, that he has made a fiction-film in a fact-setting which is more real than O'Flaherty and as firm as those rocks which the imported actors so gallantly climbed. Air and sea and short salt grass, the people that tramp over it, the washed quays they build, and the churches that draw them out in dark Sunday patterns make up the body of this film, which, in story, deals with the evacuation of an outpost island and migration forced by modern machinery.

SPANISH EARTH. (Academy. Produced and directed by Joris Ivens. Commentary and Narration by Ernest Hemingway. Photography, John Freno.)

A TECHNICAL OBJECTION, of a kind never before made, caused the censors to delay the granting of a certificate to this picture. In consequence, it could not be shown at the first National Congress of the International Peace Campaign. Read what you like between those lines—especially if you know the British censor. Now, with some cuts and an "Adult" certificate, it has been passed. It is a noble picture. It is not belittling *They Shall not Pass*, *Defence of Madrid* and the rest to say that *Spanish Earth* is the best film to have come out of Spain. Those films served their purpose at the time, but were made hurriedly. This has been planned by a brilliant documentarian and an author for long sympathetic to the Spanish people. It is with the Spanish people rather than the war that it deals. Most of all, it deals with the earth—the earth of Spain which for years the people wanted to irrigate and which their fascist landlords refused to. Here we see a village on the road between Madrid and Valencia. In the midst of war, the people are irrigating their land. Increasing its productivity so as to send food and wine to the defenders of Madrid. The fighting goes on, but the farming goes on too—and for the same reason. Because to labourers and soldiers alike, Spain is their country, their land, their earth.

## SHORT FILMS

HEREFORD HERD. (Gaumont-British Instructional. "Secrets of Life" Series. Directed by Mary Field. Camera: J. Rose.)

IT CAME AS a surprise to know that a Hereford bull may cost anything from £500 to £8,000. Perhaps it shouldn't have, but I didn't know and this film taught me. It takes you straight to a farm, where the young farmers are being taught how to judge bulls. I would have liked to have been told what are the points in judging, for I had to ask what "deep" meant. But I realized that the film didn't set out to be a lesson in bull-judging, it hadn't time, for its theme was that Hereford cattle is so important and so in demand that much that is imported from Australia and the Argentine is just British beef coming back to us. And that, I dare say, is something neither you nor I had thought of.

CATCH OF THE SEASON. (Gaumont-British Instructional. "Secrets of Life" Series. Directed by Mary Field. Camera: Percy Smith. Commentary, Basil Emmott.)

ONE OF THE more "popular" of the fifty odd films produced annually at the little Cleveland Street studio, this shows the birth, life, and near-death of a trout. The fish doesn't die, because it gets free of the bait; but before it has done this, we have seen how a fish is caught from under water. Angles of refraction were taken into account, and the result is the first film to give a scientifically correct fish's-eye view of river-life and what goes on above. Apart from this, it is also an accurate demonstration of the difference between a good and bad "cast".

DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHICK. (Gaumont-British Instructional. Made by Percy Smith.)

THE CINEMA MUST be eternally grateful to Percy Smith for the prestige his devoted service has given it. He spent three years on this film, which shows not as you might think the development of the chick on leaving the egg, but the growth of the embryo inside the egg. The veins of the egg cross the screen like rivers. It seems Mars we are looking at, till the heart gathers itself into shape. And then comes the moment when the heart starts to beat—you see, clearly and breath-takingly, the first stroke. Life has begun. What is there to say of this picture, except that it exaltingly shows you just that? It is so purely scientific that I found much of the commentary hard to follow (half the words and names were new to me, not a scientist), but what there was never any question of missing was that moment in which I suddenly saw I was watching the beginning of life.

CHILDREN AT SCHOOL. (Made by John Grierson and Basil Wright for the Gas, Light and Coke Company.)

ANNUALLY, THE GAS, Light and Coke Company make one film not specifically devoted to the claims of either gas, light or coke. Last year, it was *Nutrition*; this year it is *Children at School*. The subject was touched on in *Nutrition*, and it is the first time that strikes most sharply, if not most deeply. This is not to say that *Children at School* is not striking. It should open the eyes of many to the condition of some of our schools in England. Scenes show teachers' voices drowned by passing trains, walls crumbling, inadequate lavatory accommodation, inadequate class-room space—so that two classes go on in one room. The editor of *The Spectator* comments sympathetically, and the better schools are not left out. Indeed, there might be said to be a little too much of the perfect schools, for one is so appalled by the condition of others that inevitably one wants to know more. But there is enough to leave you to think of—for instance, the difficulty of a teacher controlling, let alone teaching, a class of fifty pupils. Further, when one is shown the many things that *are* taught and encouraged, one is apt to get too rosy a view unless one remembers that the same boy does not do all these things. It is the old story of the school prospectus—French, German, swimming, and riding. Sounds grand. But it usually turns out to be “either/or”. I would have preferred to have seen *one* pupil going through school, than selected shots of all. However, this is “documentary” at its best.

WORK PAYS AMERICA. (Made by the Works Progress Administration, U.S.A.)

THIS IS ONE of three American documentaries specially shown at the English Speaking Association, by courtesy of the United States Embassy, the Rural Re-settlement Administration, the Tennessee Valley Authority, and the American National Committee on Intellectual Co-operation. Late in the documentary field, America sent them over to the Paris Exposition, and the opportunity was taken to show them in England before they were sent back. *Work Pays America* is a highly interesting survey of the achievements of the W.P.A. It stresses forcibly that the illness of unemployment is to be treated by giving men work, not dole. And so we see public money spent on employing men in public works—road-making, bridge-building and so on. Not only manual labour is shown; social service, research, find their place. The weakness of the film was that in drawing attention to how much had been done, it rather suggested nothing had been done before, and one was left with the feeling that in pre-Roosevelt America there were no crèches, no road-repairs, almost no drains, and no bridges. *Rain for the Earth* chronicled satisfactorily attempts to alleviate drought, but *The Tennessee Valley*

*Authority at Work* missed a chance. Seeking to show how the T.V.A. prevents both floods and droughts, it did not come up to the standard of *The Plow that Broke* or *The Dust Bowl*. Some of the films included shots used in *Work Pays America*. This is a mistake. Documentarians must realize that it lessens faith in their "directness" if we find the same "actual" material being used for different purposes. In cutting, commentary, and tempo, however, these American documentaries were excellent and it is to be observed that, unlike our own, they were openly propagandist and political.

THE FORTY-NINTH STATE. (March of Time. Radio. Privately viewed.)

A SHORT ON the subject of Hawaii, this is an excellent example of commercial documentary at its best. As the commentator's phrase, "The Gibraltar of the Pacific" will explain, it treats Hawaii in terms of its geographical and political situation between Japan and America and, in order that this may be the more understood, sufficient of the past history of the island is included.

THE OLD MILL. (Walt Disney Silly Symphony. United Artists. Leicester Square Theatre.)

HAVING HAD OCCASION to record signs of falling off in Disney, I must now record what seems a climbing-back. This symphony returns to his original style of the slightest of themes, lyrically developed. We have merely a mill. Frogs are croaking, grass-hoppers chirping, and two doves—to the chagrin of a prim owl—are cooing. Evening deepens, turns into night, with attendant terrors. This works up into a storm. Then, when its force is spent, calm returns. That is all. But whilst there is plenty of humour (such as the frog swallowing a glow-worm), there is a poetic serenity about both the colouring and the mood of the whole. The slightness of the theme allows Disney, further, once again to create character in a few deft touches.



## REVIEWS OF BOOKS

VINCENT VAN GOGH<sup>1</sup>

THE BOOK IS very interesting, pick it up anywhere; "I have also just now a little pear-tree—the ground violet . . .", "in an orchard—lilac ploughland, a reed fence . . .", "it is oranges . . .", "the white orchard is dead white, the rose-coloured orchard is a rather warm creamy white." These fragments, torn bodily from the section headed *Arles*, read rather like specimens of the early *soi-disant* Imagist poets. London, Amsterdam, the Hague, come up in their element, a bridge, a wind-mill, a peasant trudging by a canal, subdued, cool, mist-swept, with less fervour, less fever, less dangerous cerebralism.

I am reminded in reading these letters of certain phrases from the writing of D. H. Lawrence; "a farm by the highroad among corn-fields, and a meadow full of yellow buttercups, a ditch of irises, green leaves, and purple flowers," might have been done by either. The book is a fascinating ethical, as well as a valuable psychological study; as a human document, it may be read almost as a novel. My quarrel comes when I turn back to the preface and read this, "Vincent van Gogh was one of the world's loneliest souls."

A common mistake. This preface-writer-editor is however, sadly enough, one only of many who have taken that superficial, somewhat patronizing, wholly impertinent attitude to the artist. Dead, just dead, only just-dead not quite dead, I have watched this sort of paternal undertaker grab from the actual maw of the only just dead a sheaf of letters, a portfolio of unfinished sketches, an old passport, a pair of boots, a fountain pen, not yet dead of its ink. Carrion crows, vultures. I should be positively afraid to die if my unpublished papers were worth snatching. In fact, people would keep alive in order to do their own editing. A quarrel I have with the late aforementioned D. H. Lawrence. I am old enough, I presume, to feel that a come-back is perhaps more valorous than a black-out. Perhaps I was too much on top of poets who already, as they crossed the Channel, had a line of ghouls waiting this side, to snatch their immortal last fields-forever-England. This is no personal quarrel. Mr. Stone has done an excellent piece of work, and comparatively speaking his "Vincent van Gogh was one of the world's loneliest souls" is innocuous.

Just as a remark and the sort of thing to get the reading public, I repeat this "loneliest soul" touch is a commonplace, hardly vital enough to be noted. Yet the accumulation of these public-mind-forming sentences does, in time, heap up such a cotton-wool of false padding

<sup>1</sup> *Dear Theo, An Autobiography of Vincent van Gogh, from His Letters.* Edited by Irving Stone. Constable. 12s. 6d.

between the reality of creative impulse and the, so to speak, receiving station of the reader or, in the case of pictures, the spectator. The trouble was, I think, with Vincent, he was not lonely enough. A spot of loneliness might have kept him from splitting in the middle, going mad, as they called it, in the midst of his most vivid period of creative output. If he had been comfortably lonely, he might have gone on painting carefully until he was eighty. As it was, he painted madly, five pictures in one week now and again, breaking in to the world of reality, his reality, Mr. Stone's illusion. The dream.

The dreamer isn't lonely. Not when, like van Gogh, he has reached that level of spiritual perfection. The dreamer, the artist, the saint, the monk on the snow levels of Tibet, are frightfully and dynamically and electrically unlonely people. If these mix freely among their own kind or any kind, some of that intensity works itself off, or out. Van Gogh couldn't or didn't. His small room, like the monk's cell, was filled with over-layers of light. He must get that. Green, yellow, the whole gamut of his spiritual values, they are there, terribly near, a menace if you will, the kingdom of heaven so terribly within. Written above one of his pictures at the recent exhibition at the Paris Exposition is this : " Pas de bleu sans jaune et sans orange et si vous faites le bleu, faites donc le jaune, l'orange aussi, n'est-ce pas ? "

N'est-ce pas ?

This man isn't lonely. He is simply drunk with colours, as lonely, yes exactly, as a bee or moth on the cup of whatever it happens to be, colour ; trumpet flower, coral berry, wax-berry, gold-frilled petal of the evening primrose, green where a stem grows silver or where another green turns moss-green or under-apple-leaf green ; these were things that for him had their exact counterpart on that miraculous palette. We have words merely, and he had words, too. But in addition, he had the exact material under his hand (I copy again), " aux couleurs simples—ocre, rouge, jaune, brun, cobalt et bleu de Prusse, jaune de Naples, terre de Sienne, noir et blanc et encore un peu de carmine, de sépia, de cinabre, d'outremer, de gomme-gutte. . . . "

Simple colours ?

Squinting sometimes through his eyelashes, as he describes it, he sees the breaking up of the contour of ordinary dimension. This is the most dynamically unlonely pastime that can be imagined. It is the gift of the saint, the seer, the drug addict if you will. Patmos once witnessed one such, in the throes of breaking through, out of time, into eternity. But the eternity of John of Patmos is, as someone has described it, a goldsmith's paradise. The seer of Patmos described peacock feathered animals with octopus inlay gem-eyes. The much later seer of the Hague and Arles finds the same dimensional, demented values in a bowl of brown potatoes. A Francis or Thérèse discovers cloud emblems, fiery wounds, and roses in the prison cell of the cenobite.

Vincent was not unhappy when forced into an insane asylum, but writes logically to his brother, "my illness makes me paint, if I could only paint, I would be well, yes, lock me up if it is necessary, but O, it would mean so much to me to get out into the orchards. Curiously, there is little or no cry of the martyr in this. His fields-forever are in his own soul; that, he carries with him. That soul has become so subtly one with a porcelain bowl, with one head of late summer sunflower, with remembered dune and lake and sand-bank and twisted cypress, that relatively, even in solitary confinement, he is not lonely enough. He lacked some stabilizing quality of loneliness that carries with it steel ropes. He was roped in by nothing. Like the Chinese philosophers of the *tao* doctrine, he had left his shell already behind, "house-builder thou art seen." His own soul that had worked, like the shellfish outward, to perfect its housing, broke through too soon. He saw in simplicity. What he saw remains for us, a field in rain, a static cypress whirling within, like a dervish, a cloud of stars that are miraculously as human as dandelions. He reversed the process of Patmos. To John of Patmos, the dandelion, the sunflower would have been whorls of a zodiac lion-man, hieratically inset with proper, figurative precious stone or beaten metal. Vincent complains, or explains rather, how thorns actually have scratched his canvas, sand blows on it, flies settle. Painting out of doors, hungry, wet, each canvas has its root in the reality that to him was only one whit less innately god-like than the thing he painted. The thing he painted became humanized, in much the same way as the Master of the Revelator sanctified a common coin, a candlestick, a net full of fresh lake-fish, the net itself or any field flower. Vincent draws heaven down to earth, but with no affectation. It is simply there within him.

He cheated, yes. Hunger is one road toward those realities. Hunger, then a drain of some Arlésien brew sent him spinning. To read these letters, to look at these pictures, is to be fed. He speaks of "the colour of a good dusty potato, unpeeled", colour again of "ripe corn", a good woman, presumed to be a witch, who does nothing, as far as Vincent can make out, but dig her potato pit. Witchcraft, the Delphic seer he mentions, the magic of the tripod, are in these things.

Let the artist, writes Vincent simply to his brother, "proceed from the primary colours, red, blue, yellow, and not from grey." Again, "I do not pretend to say that one can or must paint light without white, any more than I should ever pretend wine must be dry." He says, "I don't ask comfort . . . I do ask colours." One sees with his eyes the *blanc sur blanc*, he uses in describing someone else's picture of a bride. But, for Vincent, the true *blanc sur blanc* is to be found in an orchard; his marriage, like that of the holy hermit, is consummated in his own mind. So, confined to the asylum cell, he complains to his *alter ego*, this Theo of the letters, of only one thing. The food is not

bad ; true, he would like to be allowed to smoke as some of the inmates do, he would like a book, yes, he could do with some Shakespeare. He is not, he adds, badly off, there is a garden. But he has no canvas, these good people cannot realize that this is the high flaming moment when he could reach the height of ecstasy, create, be healed. The sun-god at Delphi, was, by no trivial logic, a physician in his own right. So the artist carries the germ of his own healing. Vincent wants chiefly the orchard that he remembers from last spring, his *blanc sur blanc*, the veils of fragrant beauty. He loves, would draw to him, re-create through him, this world of visible beauty. But unlike the Oriental to whose prints and flower-paintings he constantly states indebtedness, a Christ-like fever causes him to cry out for the true presentation of the poor, the outcast, this good woman who was a witch, but whose whole sorcery consists in digging her potato pit. His preoccupation with the ritual of colour is surpassed only by his love for his fellow creatures and in particular for artists to come, " unknown artists ", as he calls them.

His last thought is for them, children of his dangerous, dynamic cerebralism with that cool, immaculate bride, *blanc sur blanc*, the apple orchards of the south in sun or mist, under stars or in the rain. For these he prays, may they fend with " a will, a feeling, a passion, and love ".

S. PENN

## SOME AMERICAN AND BRITISH POETS

POEMS. By ETTA BLUM. New York Golden Eagle Editions. \$1.50.

THE FALL OF THE CITY. By ARCHIBALD MACLEISH. Boriswood.  
3s. 6d.

THE DISAPPEARING CASTLE. By CHARLES MADGE. Faber. 6s.

INTERCESSIONS. By DENIS DEVLIN. Europa Press. 3s. 6d.

EQUINOX. By ROBIN WILSON. Nelson. 2s. 6d.

POEMS AND DOCUMENTS. By ROGER BURFORD. White and  
White. 4s.

FOR BRITISH WRITERS the great virtue of contemporary American prose lies in its close factual observation, its visual clarity, its verbal toughness, its very lack of music, rhythm, and what Gerald Manley Hopkins called " inscape ". The same qualities are found, perhaps less

happily, in American poetry. T. S. Eliot in whom a unique voice and the sense of inner depths predominate more than in any other poet except Rilke, is, of course, the great exception. Unfortunately, he is the exception which proves the rule, and other American poets, striving to emulate him, have come away with a thick deposit of his pseudo-scholarship, English snobbery and gentility.

Etta Blum's poems are very good, within the contemporary American convention. They are serious, sincere, full of close visual observation and "contemporary sensibility", sensitive, experimental, accomplished in style and technique, yet with no individual style, just a succession of tricks ably exploited one after the other. There is a certain aridity about these poems, conveying a real pathos which is perhaps the only effect this very conscious and careful writer had not intended :—

" In winter now  
Trees are themselves again.  
No longer droop angular  
Behind leaf sounds,  
Gossipy concealment."

Archibald MacLeish is to me the foremost example of what I regard as the virtues and vices of American poetry. His imagery is not only visual, it is muscular. He can produce an effect of sunlight, air, and open spaces which affects me almost physically. At the same time, I rather distrust this toughness of vision which goes with a certain passivity of language towards many literary influences. One would expect a man with MacLeish's vigorous eye to have a tongue as vigorous as a gangster on the films. One is surprised when he breaks into speech which vaguely recalls translations from the Greek. The music of MacLeish's poetry is striking and often beautiful. Yet it is not at all an inner music. It is, if one may thus speak of music, as external as his imagery immediately recalling the seen object. It recalls the muscular rhythmic movement, the singing breeze, and also, again betraying its own external toughness, the music of Guillaume Apollinaire. *The Fall of the City* contains some of MacLeish's most moving poetry, and it is an extremely interesting experiment in the use to which poetry may be put in broadcasting. In his Preface Mr. MacLeish claims that "the Announcer is the most useful dramatic personage since the Greek Chorus". This certainly ought to be true, though personally I am rather bored by Radio commentators, and when I listened to this poem being broadcast, I found myself listening less closely to the announcer's than to the other speakers' parts. The play, on the contemporary theme of the fall of a city before a revolution, suffers notably from the contrast of the vigour of theme, imagery, and subject-matter with the literary style :—

"No man opposing him  
Still grows his glory.  
He needs neither foeman nor  
Thickset of blows to  
Gather his victories—  
Nor a foe's match  
To earn him his battles."

Charles Madge's *The Disappearing Castle* is the most interesting of the books here under review, and possibly the most significant book of poems published this year, yet to anyone who has followed at all closely Madge's poetic development, it is disappointing. Of his generation, there is no poet except Auden who shows as great talent as Charles Madge: yet his poetry, instead of growing in strength as it develops, seems to be directed towards a vanishing point at which one expects the poet to stop writing altogether. Like the paintings of Ben Nicholson, progressively it becomes thinner, more tenuous, abstract, impersonal until one expects that the next stage will be a blank sheet of paper. With an amazing grasp of what he does, Madge's poetry seems undermined with a fundamental doubt as to what he ought to do: his poetry grasps and commands everything except its subject.

He is so intelligent a poet that I write this with some misgiving, feeling that it may only record my own misconceptions or my own failure to appreciate his work. However, in spite of misgivings both on his and my own behalf, there are many poems here which I am grateful for, particularly the earlier sonnets, "The Loves of the Lions," and the rhetoric of "Delusions". If Charles Madge does indeed stop writing poetry it will be a loss to English literature.

The remaining books (*Equinox*, by Robin Wilson, *Intercessions*, by Denis Devlin, *Poems and Documents*, by Roger Burford) are interesting as personal revelations rather than as poetry. Mr. Burford's book seems to me the best, both because his experiences are more interesting than the emotional attitudes of the other two writers, and because there are few literary preoccupations in his verse, whereas Mr. Wilson and Mr. Devlin both have acquired styles which ought to shed. Mr. Burford writes straightforwardly of his experiences, sex, travel, work in a film studio, social dissatisfaction, the endeavour to sabotage his own career and to discover a philosophy of life. He certainly would not claim that he had reached the end of his mental journey, though the little prose notes he occasionally intersperses convey a sense of disgust with his own past and tolerance towards his present which might indicate a certain faith in progress. In some of these poems the symbolism is inclined to be too personal to the author, and the result is a certain obscurity, as in *The Gull* which nevertheless contains some of his best lines.

Mr. Devlin seems to think that if he just lets himself rip, he will

write something as inspired as, say, Rimbaud. It is a pity, because when he is restrained and direct, he can write much better :—

“ Sometimes a close-eyed steamer outside port  
 Keeping my eyes about me in these foreign parts  
 I refuse to budge  
 Till the pilot takes the bridge  
 Then in the warm arms of breakwaters pressed  
 Allow my hold to be cleared without protest.”

Here, he is at his best and most exact. Unfortunately though, most of his book suffers from that enormous inflation of purely verbal values which one associates with the American writers in the magazine *transition* :—

“ Why, how often, with first the matchlight knocking  
 With little alluring jabs, drabness  
 Of moist blankets ” etc.

There are altogether far too many moist blankets in this book.

“ When I possess me of your face, your arms,” etc.

is the style in which Mr. Robin Wilson writes. I do not like it, yet reading all of these volumes, I am bound to ask whether, as a style, it is worse than the academic modernism of his fellow poets. The difference is much the same as that between the drabness of the painters who exhibit in the Royal Academy and the drabness of those who exhibit in the London Group. There are moments when I almost prefer the Royal Academy, and there are moments when I almost prefer Mr. Wilson's stuff to that of Mr. Devlin. Yet it is a depressing reflection that our time has created no style, the mere exercise of which reflects a culture. Instead of a common style, what we have is a series of experiments, the best of them brilliant and exciting, the worst lazy and unobservant. Perhaps the moral is that if we are to look for a vigorous and energetic school of poetry, it will grow not from the few exceptional individualists who have built up a style and a technique from nothing, but from the working class writers who, if they are without technical knowledge, at least have the inestimable boon of having something to write about other than their own personalities so lacking in significant experience.

STEPHEN SPENDER

LAMENT FOR THE DEATH OF A BULLFIGHTER, and Other Poems. By FEDERICO GARCIA LORCA, in the original Spanish with the English translation by A. L. LLOYD. Heinemann. 6s.

THE VIRTUES OF Lorca's poetry lie in its beautiful music, its strong and original imagery, the poet's mastery of a simple narrative style, and above all in a magic which is perhaps the rarest of all qualities in lyric poetry. He is a poet of the people, not because he was a proletarian

nor because he was a politician, but because his poetry is loved by the Spanish people and is deeply rooted in the traditional Spanish romance.

Lorca's magic is untranslatable, but it is by no means incommunicable, in fact, there are surface delights in his poetry which can be easily enjoyed by the reader who knows very little Spanish, using Mr. Lloyd's translation as a crib. This book is, therefore, highly to be recommended, as it puts the work of a great poet within easy reach of a wide English public. Moreover, the publishers are to be congratulated for producing and printing excellently what is a very pleasant book.

However, the English version itself cannot be recommended without certain very strong reservations. Neither Lorca's music nor his indefinable magic can be translated, but one element in his poetry can be reproduced and that is the imagery; it is here that Mr. Lloyd's version is adequate, but only adequate. To take only one example, I should have thought that in a poem where the imagery is very important the order of the images is as essential to the quality of the poem, as is the order of notes in a sonata or of colours in a picture. Yet throughout nearly all of *La Casada Infiel*, for some inexplicable reason, Mr. Lloyd has changed the order of each couplet.

"Fu la noche de Santiago  
y casi por compromiso."

"It happened on the night of Santiago, and as if by pledge," the poem begins. To me it is important here that the "night of Santiago" encloses, almost like a bracket, "almost as if by pledge" and all that comes after. However, Mr. Lloyd inverts the order of these lines:—

"It happened as if by pledge  
upon Saint James's night."

Later he starts interpreting—and to my mind misinterpreting—the original.

"Sus muslos se me escapaban  
como peces sorprendidos,  
la mitad llenos de lumbre  
la mitad llenos de frío."

This means, literally: "Her thighs escaped from me Like startled fish The half full of light The half full of cold." But Mr. Lloyd writes:

"Her thighs escaped from me  
like two startled trout,  
one half of them cold,  
and the other full of light,"

thus redundantly adding to our knowledge that a girl has two thighs, deciding for Lorca that the fish are trout, and inserting the ridiculous "one and other" contrast, as though to suggest either that each fish was divided into two halves, one of cold, one of light, or else that one fish was cold and the other light: whereas Lorca beautifully and



sensitively suggests that fish are both cold and luminous in equal proportions.

Through mistakes of this kind a great many of Lorca's effects are quite unnecessarily sacrificed in the translation. In the first section of the *Death of a Bullfighter*, Lorca produces an extraordinary effect by suddenly alternating the past and the present tense, in order to give the impression that when the bullfighter lies dying on the ground, the sudden realization of what happened to him when he was in the ring breaks across his impressions of the moment :—

“ A coffin on wheels is his bed  
at five in the afternoon.  
Bones and flutes sound in his ears  
at five in the afternoon.”

Then the tense switches back :—

“ Already the bull was bellowing through his forehead  
at five in the afternoon.  
The room was iridescent with agony  
at five in the afternoon.”

The strong impressions are put in the past tense, the faint in the vague historic present, just as when one is lying half-conscious after an anæsthetic one's clear-cut impressions are of the past, the present seems unreal or vague, unless it occasionally cuts across one's semi-consciousness in a moment of agony. I may be wrong in this impression of Lorca's poem, but I still cannot see the point of mistranslating his tenses. Obviously the effects of such an artist as Lorca are very deliberate.

In the same poem, Mr. Lloyd fails to follow Lorca in the passage beginning “There was no Prince in Seville”, in which the poem changes its mood suddenly to the extreme simplicity of earlier Spanish ballad poetry. However, it is possible to have several views of what Lorca intended and I do not wish to insist that Mr. Lloyd share all of mine. One can only be grateful that this translation has been made, appreciate its many virtues, and express the hope that if there is another edition, some slight inaccuracies will be corrected.

STEPHEN SPENDER

## IS THINKING DANGEROUS?

MOSCOW, 1937. By LION FEUCHTWANGER. Gollancz. 2s. 6d.

MANY A PROPOSITION is best proved by the reduction *ad absurdum* of its opposite. The proof ends with contradiction of an axiom, something that both sides accept, and this “is impossible”. André Gide's *Back from the U.S.S.R.* seems to me a possible starting point for such

a proof, and occasionally Feuchtwanger brings off something of the kind. For example his summary of current objections is effective :

"At bottom all objections to the Soviet Union by Western intellectuals can be summarized under two heads, the one moral and the other æsthetic. Under the moral head comes the criticism that in consequence of the difference in incomes new classes must of necessity arise ; and under the æsthetic, the criticism that the Soviet regime tends to depersonalization of the individual, thereby reducing all to one monotonous level. Thus in the end the æsthetic objection and the moral objection are levelled at precisely opposite tendencies."

He writes a heading to this paragraph : "Beware of inequality, beware of equality."

Elsewhere he makes a neat point about the objection to inequality of income : "It appears to me that Socialism is concerned not with the distribution of poverty, but with the distribution of wealth." He finds the anxiety of Gide and others "an atavistic derivative of primitive Christian views, and more pious than reasonable".

Feuchtwanger's impressions are worth attention. He is cautious and honest. As a German he has learnt to be suspicious. ("Good friends of mine, and, moreover, quite intelligent individuals, had their judgment clouded by the effusiveness of the German Fascists, and I wondered whether, for me too, the appearance of men and things was not being distorted by personal vanity.") His generous praise gains by his caution.

But Feuchtwanger is not a Gide, and it may be his book will be read mostly by those whose minds are made up ; perhaps the others will be interested in his reservations. As a man he finds the Soviet Union the country of the good life : as a writer he has a difficulty, though he thinks it may be a passing one. The difficulty appears when he is writing of "conformism"—the term introduced by that born and bred non-conformist, André Gide. Mostly, Feuchtwanger finds, it is "what is elsewhere called patriotism", but patriotism with an interesting difference because "with a rational foundation".

Visitors to the Paris Exhibition this summer will testify that whatever one thought of the Soviet Pavilion it was stating a case. The whole of the U.S.S.R. is stating a case. In Paris the Soviet Pavilion offered something to think about : the other countries—something to feel for. They offered tokens of dead geniuses, nostalgia for an heroic past, admiration for climate and scenery, hints of national character. They offered mysticism, salesmanship, and (in the British Pavilion) whimsy. The Soviet Pavilion offered—propaganda ? Or shall we say, a proposition with a query : "Do you accept the argument ?"

To Feuchtwanger this is acceptable. Soviet patriotism is a reasoned case. It is optimistic on good grounds. He recites some of them. "In 1936 the Soviet worker's average wage had increased by 278 per cent. compared with 1929," and as an indication that this state of things

will continue he offers the fact, among others, that while "the gold reserves of Germany have fallen to £5 million, those of the Soviet Union have risen to £1,400 million". But when optimism is transferred from statistics to literature he begins to have doubts.

He is impressed by the material advantages writers enjoy; by their huge publics (31 million copies of Pushkin's works were circulated in 1936, a 100,000 edition of Kant's works was "sold out at once"); he is impressed by the Soviet theatre (there are thirty-eight theatres in Moscow and the Arts Theatre has never had an empty seat since it was opened). But he is alarmed by "standardized optimism".

"Those Soviet writers who diverge from the 'General Principle' are not completely suppressed, but preference is clearly given to those who strike the note of heroic optimism in all their works as frequently and unmistakably as possible." "Fear of the forbidden defeatism often manifests itself in the most childish ways." "Only classics are left for those theatres which do not want to give heroically optimistic plays." "Political intervention" in the theatre tries "to divert the political trends of the works into the proper channels at the expense of their artistic quality, giving them an emphasis which often leads to coarseness".

He is saying very much what Gide in more subtle phrases has said already, but it is impressive how the difference in angle changes the criticism. For Gide, less in *Back from the U.S.S.R.* than in its sequel *Afterthoughts on the U.S.S.R.*, has almost reached the point of denying what I have called axioms (or, they used to be axioms for Gide), the common ground that makes discussion possible.

Feuchtwanger's reservations are almost confined to the sphere of art and literature. He quotes elsewhere in *Moscow 1937* the story of Socrates who, when questioned about certain obscurities in Heraclitus answered, "What I have understood is excellent. From which I conclude that the rest which I have not understood is also excellent." But that is too easy; we have farther to go.

Some of Gide's passages on this point are well known by now.

"In our form of society, a great writer, a great artist, is essentially non-conformist. He makes head against the current. This was true of Dante, of Cervantes, of Ibsen, of Gogol. It is not true apparently of Shakespeare and his contemporaries. . . . It was no doubt not true of Sophocles and certainly not of Homer, who is the voice, we feel, of Greece itself. It would perhaps cease to be true the day that—but this is the very reason that we turn our eyes with such anxious interrogation to the Soviet Union. Will the triumph of the revolution allow its artists to be borne by the current? For the question arises—what will happen if the transformation of the social State deprives the artist of all motive for opposition?"

Of course he is contradicting himself. He says the withdrawal of the need to revolt may enable the writer to scale Homeric or Shakespearean heights: and in the same breath hints that the loss of motive for opposition may mean the loss of literature. He can scarcely believe

both at once. Gide, as I read him, tends to confuse the writer in revolt with the writer who is ahead of his day. Are they necessarily the same? In what way is technical revolution in literature related to social revolution?

Gide puts it this way.

"The great majority, even when composed of the best individuals, never bestows its approbation on what is new, potential, unconcerted, and disconcerting in a work; but only on what it can recognize, that is to say, the commonplace . . . I wonder with some anxiety whether perhaps in this Soviet Union there may not be vegetating obscurely, unknown to the crowd, some Keats, or some Rimbaud, who by very reason of his worth must make himself heard. And yet he of all others is the one who is important for those who are at first disdained, like Rimbaud, Keats, Baudelaire, and even Stendhal, are those who to-morrow will be the greatest."

Baudelaire and Rimbaud are an interesting pair in this gallery. Paul Valéry in his introduction to *Les Fleurs du Mal* describes the literary revolt of Baudelaire as being begun under the influence of Poe and directed against "un état d'esprit anti-scientifique" of the Romantic poets. The passage describing Poe's criticism, as seen through the eyes of Baudelaire, Mallarmé, and Valéry himself, serves our turn rather well. It is long but worth quoting.

"Never," says Valéry, "never before the time of Edgar Poe, had the problem of literature been examined in its premises, reduced to a problem of psychology, and approached by way of an analysis in which the logic and mechanism of literary effects were used deliberately. The relation between the work and reader was elucidated for the first time, and considered as the foundation of the art in practice. The analysis, and this is something that assures us of its value, is applicable and can be tested in every sphere of literary production. These same observations, distinctions, quantitative measurements and controlling ideas are adapted just as much to works intended to work on the sensibility powerfully and coarsely, and intended to attract the public that wants strong emotions and strange adventures, as they are to poetry's refined forms and delicate organization."

Baudelaire (and without him there would have been no Rimbaud) took four points from Poe: (1) deliberate attention to the relation of writer and audience; (2) arising from this, attention to the quantitative measurement of his effects; (3) an attempt to specialize the functions of the different literary forms; and he added (4) an interest in morbid psychology. Baudelaire's revolution was to apply a scientific method to literature. Attempting to do this in nineteenth century society he went mad. Poe was no more fortunate. Of Baudelaire's successors Rimbaud gave up poetry at nineteen for soldiering in the Dutch East Indies and then commerce—or gun-running—in Abyssinia. Mallarmé kept up a lonely struggle. Valéry "gave the game up" about 1900, but returned to it in 1916. Between this attempt and an individualist society there is evidently a conflict which for the writer tends to be mortal.

How does it work out in a socialist society? Can we not say that if

the writers Gide mentions are to be taken as the true types of the modern writer—and I believe they are—then Gide has misstated the problem and Feuchtwanger has avoided it? The attempt to apply scientific method universally is the basis of the new society. Will a writer who wishes *to use his mind* be received unsympathetically? Possibly, because good relations between writer and reader are easier to analyse than produce, as André Gide, whose *Nourritures Terrestres* sold 500 copies in the first twenty years, has good reason to know. The writer will not complain of the coarseness of public “intervention” in his work. He will know that an audience expresses itself either by booing or cheering, coarse reactions to perhaps subtle stimuli. He may even welcome the magnification as showing a clear if negative result. And he will go on to try and understand the reaction, accepting responsibility for his own experiments. He will not be like the virgin who thought love all petting.

A misguided John Webster complained in his prefaces that a coarse public compelled him to write a *Duchess of Malfi* instead of the correct Senecan drama he would have preferred; but Webster had not the good fortune to live in an intelligible society. And when Feuchtwanger boggles at the still evident self-consciousness in the relation between writer and audience in the U.S.S.R. I find it difficult to share his alarm. For what seems to lie behind his plea for handling the writer with gloves on (or hats off) is a “nice” view of literary creation that has little to do with the real thing.

In an interview with Feuchtwanger Stalin shrugged his shoulders “at the vulgarity of the immoderate worship of his person”. “He excuses his peasants and workers on the grounds that they have had too much to do to be able to acquire good taste as well, and laughs a little at the hundreds of enormously enlarged portraits of a man with a moustache which dance before his eyes at demonstrations.”

Feuchtwanger goes on: “I pointed out to him that in the end even men of unimpeachable taste have set up busts and portraits of him, of more than doubtful artistic merit, in places to which they do not belong, as, for example, the Rembrandt Exhibition. Here he became serious. He supposed that there lie behind such extravagances the zeal of men who had only lately espoused the regime and were now doing everything within their power to prove their loyalty. . . . ‘A servile fool,’ he said irritably, ‘does more harm than a hundred enemies.’”

It takes time to acquire political—or any other—understanding, and there are many who cheat and invent short cuts. But in a society where love of country, as Feuchtwanger puts it, is not mystical but “consolidated with the good cement of reason”, where “a sober ethic prevails really *more geometrico constructa*” (Feuchtwanger again), who do you back as a winner in the end, the servile fool who writes or the honest writer?

MONTAGU SLATER

## WAR LITERATURE

UNCENSORED ! The True Story of the Clandestine Newspaper *La Libre Belgique* published in Brussels during the German Occupation. By OSCAR E. MILLARD. Illustrated. Hale. 12s. 6d.

WHEN OPPRESSION DRIVES the ordinary man to law breaking, he shows a capacity for crime far superior to most professionals. The production of the 171 issues of *La Libre Belgique* during rather more than three and a half years, in the face of the fiercest efforts at suppression, the perpetual arrest of those concerned, and on two occasions of practically the whole organization, entailed the most courageous and self-sacrificing audacity. At one time a printing press was transported across Brussels, installed in a secret room, and operated for several months next door to a high German officer's quarters ; the principal contributor was imprisoned yet regularly smuggled out contributions ; a photograph of a special corps of detectives sent from Berlin to suppress the paper was stolen and published ; after the second mass trial the German Governor gave a dinner to celebrate the final suppression of *La Libre Belgique* in the course of which a copy of a new issue was delivered to him. Mr. Millard tells the story of these and a thousand other adventures in plain if sometimes adjectival language and there can be nothing but praise for his assiduity in gathering the diversified material. But what lifts this book out of history and gives it immediacy and poignancy is the knowledge that in many countries to-day men are forced into similar stratagems and dangers to keep the thin stream of freedom alive. Like the deep currents of the sea their work only occasionally causes an eddy on the surface of the outside world, and it is heartening to get some idea of the courage and resource which they must exercise, especially when many have to fight the same oppressors who in this book appear a little less bestial than they do to-day.

D. STURGE MOORE

THE LIFE AND DEATH OF A SPANISH TOWN. By ELLIOT PAUL. New York : Random House. \$2.50. London : Peter Davies. 8s. 6d.

" NOTHING WILL HAPPEN to me, I mind my own business." You heard that phrase yesterday and you will hear it again to-morrow. " Why, who would bother with us, we haven't any political affiliations ! " People laugh, turn to the sports page and really believe that good citizens are unmolested in times of trouble. Thousands of families in Spain said the same words only eighteen months ago. Elliot Paul tells us what happened to some of them, in his story of Santa Eulalia, a small island off the mainland.

The author went to live in his Spanish town a few years ago, with his

wife, his child, and his dog. His book begins quietly with stories of the friends he made, fishermen, farmers, landowners, and painters. The life was no different from that of any fisher place, except that they had the sun, strange shimmering fish, almonds, olives, and a speech that bore traces of four thousand years of history, from the time of the Phœnicean traders to the Crusades, from seventeenth century ships and Barbary pirates, to the present day. It is not easy to make a new picture of the Mediterranean, there is the tremendous competition of the Cretan vases, of the Greek songs, but this book gives, perhaps because it is simply a record that certain days may not be wholly lost, the sun on salt freshness of the southern islands.

There were one or two fascists, a revolutionary or so, but there were hundreds, rich and poor and middle class, who laughed and quarrelled and worked, dug the land, fished, and if they spoke of politics at all, joked about them, for they were never of the day's realities.

It was the same, except for the hotter sun, as any Cornish or Kentish village, hardly more than a year ago.

The war came overnight, first with a fascist triumph. Peasants were flung into prison, stores began to give out, the electric light failed. Whole families were fugitives for there was no reason for any arrest, if something they wore or said happened not to please the temporary officials people were seized and imprisoned.

Everything was upside down, then the loyalist troops came. People began to hope and to build. No one understood what had happened very well but there was a moment when the island seemed to become a unit in a new world. It proved impossible, however, for military reasons to defend a group of sea encircled rocks, the soldiers withdrew and with them a fortunate group of such islanders as were of military age. A few days later fascist aeroplanes dropped bombs. Some hundreds of women, children, and old men perished in a wreck of little houses and fishing boats, *still not knowing what the struggle was about*.

Mr. Paul, his family, and a few non-Spanish residents who had escaped, were taken to safety in a destroyer. Most of his friends were dead, a few tried to get away in a fishing smack. Little was left to the island except its name.

I have read many records of war. None of them has made the horror and waste of a senseless destructiveness so real. This is not a book for the Left, for they know already what the author has to say. It is a document for the hundreds of thousands of families across England, who "never worry about politics," who think "the future will look after itself". What happened in Santa Eulalia can equally well happen in the Channel Islands or in Wales. There are far fewer barriers to it than most people think. The lesson that the book teaches is not because it is what the author wishes or believes but because it was proved by the facts of life and death; some fascists and some

communists escaped because they were bound to a party and got warning as to future events. The families who died were the good citizens, who had gone about their affairs and left the Government alone.

LAMBERT STONE

## CHINA

RED STAR OVER CHINA. By EDGAR SNOW. Gollancz. 18s.

RED CHINA HAS been long shrouded in a mist of mystery. Unknown not only to foreigners but also to the Chinese in the white area, it has suffered from what Mr. Snow calls a "news blockade" for years on end. It has been much talked about, indeed, yet few can boast of anything more than a hazy, and usually warped, idea of what it really is. Are the Reds "bandits", as the Nanking Government once called them? Or, is it true, as many Chinese intellectuals have declared, that the Reds are a well disciplined revolutionary force whose primary aims are to resist Japanese aggression and to liberate the oppressed Chinese masses from feudalism and imperialism?

These questions are discussed and fully answered in *Red Star over China*. The author, being the first foreigner that has "actually entered (Chinese) Red territory, visited Soviet leaders, investigated Soviet life, and returned to write the story", has been able to give the English-reading public first-handed information and eye-witness stories of the most important, thrilling, dramatic, and "hushed-up" movement in China to-day.

Here one comes across vivid portraits and vicissitudinous biographies of Mao Tse-tung, Chu Teh, Ho Lung, Peng Teh-huai, Hsu Hai-tung, and others, who are no less famous (or notorious, if you please) and "legendary" than the Flying Dutchman. Here one may find the ten-year history of Red China from the days of its Genesis. Here is the breath-holding epic of the Long March, by which the Chinese Reds trekked the distance of 6,000 miles on foot from Kiangsi to north Shensi, across some of Asia's largest and most dangerous rivers, over some of the world's most unscalable mountains, through unpenetrable forests of the aborigines in China's wild west, and with the Government troops attacking them all the way through! Here also is a full account of the world-famous drama of the Sian Incident, with its prologue and epilogue, its *mise en scène* and behind-the-curtain secrets.

These are only a few of the strokes that make the book so vivid and absorbingly interesting from cover to cover. *Red Star over China*, as a matter of fact, is so far the only book in any language, Chinese not excluded, that takes Red China as an organic whole and gives it an authentic, objective, and dramatic account which shows a remarkable insight and comprehension.

YAO HSIN-NUNG



SECRETS OF THE CHINESE DRAMA. By CECILIA S. L. ZUNG.  
Harrap. 15s.

THIS IS THE first attempt to deal in detail, for the English reader, with the technical side of the Chinese theatre. It is difficult to feel that it will ever receive a more attractive or a more thorough treatment. Almost every traditional costume, mask, musical instrument, and stage property is fully described and illustrated, often in colour. Every traditional attitude and gesture, every ritualistic movement of the sleeve, hand, arm, leg, foot, and waist, has its individual photograph and explanation. Finally, no less than fifty of the more popular plays are given in adequate synopsis. Textual notes and proper names are given throughout in Chinese and English, and available gramophone records of songs are listed. In the first chapter, Miss Zung traces the Chinese drama from its inception as a temple-rite through the tea-house-performance stage of the later dynasties to the modern "palace theatre" of to-day, giving scale-plans and photographs of typical stage-sets. Of especial interest are the series of cinematic miniatures showing the gradual transformation of the male actor into the old man or young maiden of his rôle. Anyone whose acquaintance with Chinese drama is confined to attending a single performance of the deservedly popular English version of *Lady Precious Stream* will find this book an eye-opener and a source of inexhaustible delight, and the whole subject one of staggering complexity. For instance, there are no less than twenty different official varieties of laughter, each with its particular Chinese designation (carefully given in one of those classified lists reminiscent of the games of Gargantua), thus :—to laugh happily, to laugh coldly, to laugh conceitedly, to laugh jealously, to pretend to laugh, to laugh surprisedly, to laugh hysterically, to laugh coquettishly, to laugh coyly, to laugh broken-heartedly, to laugh scornfully, to laugh insanely, to laugh treacherously, to laugh heartily, to laugh reluctantly, to laugh grievously, to laugh violently, to laugh uneasily, to laugh affrightedly, to laugh flatteringly.

As in the other arts of China, as in their verse, their painting, their calligraphy, we find beneath the engaging surface a profound system of subtleties, recognized in precisely defined categories of an order unknown to Western art criticism.

HUGH GORDON PORTEUS

THE BOOK OF SONGS. Translated from the Chinese by ARTHUR WALEY. Allen and Unwin. 10s. 6d.

THIS IS AT the same time the most authoritative and the most readable of all the translations that have been made of the *Shih Ching*—the "Poetry Classic" of China. Anyone at all interested in poetry, or in the earlier Chinese culture, will find Mr. Waley's new book most exciting, for its notes quite as much as for its translations. But it is to be regretted,

therefore, that Mr. Waley has seen fit to omit from his version fifteen of the original 305 pieces, "all of them political laments," partly on the extraordinary grounds that they are, in his opinion, "much less interesting than the others." Mr. Waley, perhaps, could not anticipate China's plight to-day, or foresee that some of these omitted odes have a particularly contemporary interest. The remainder Mr. Waley has arranged by subject (Courtship, Feasting, Sacrifice, Hunting, etc.); their main interest may be technical—to the poet and to the archæologist—but every other page will seize the attention of the general reader. Many of the simplest poems, however, are intended to be read in a double sense, and Mr. Waley's notes on these are often illuminating. Thus, in the following verses from a characteristic song :—

When a crane cries in the Nine Swamps  
 Its voice is heard in the wild.  
 A fish can plunge deep into the pool  
 Or rest upon the shoals.  
 Pleasant is that man's garden  
 Where the hardwood trees are planted :  
 But beneath them are only husks.  
*There are other hills whose stones*  
*Are good for working jade.*

Here there is first the contrast between the freedom of the bird or fish and the harder lot of man. Then the words "beneath" and "husks" refer to the indifference with which the poorer classes are treated; and finally in the refrain is to be detected a cryptic threat of emigration. It is not always so easy to discover which of several possible alternative interpretations should be put upon a given poem. Confucius of course twisted many of them quite fantastically into preposterous moral sermons. Mr. Waley has been on his guard against the official commentators, but he refuses to believe the traditional legend, which common sense should support, that Confucius was also a bit of a Bowdler. What remains of the *shih*, even in an emasculated version—for the Chinese written character by its very nature defies "translation"—is nevertheless very well worth knowing.

HUGH GORDON PORTEUS

## INDIA

HALF-CASTE. By CEDRIC DOVER. Preface by LANCELOT HOGBEN.  
 Secker and Warburg. 10s. 6d.

THE PLACE OF prejudice in modern civilization has never yet been made the subject of an exhaustive inquiry. And, it is an incredible fact that the greater number of our scientists have not been able to transcend the limitations of geography or cultural history, and the ancillaries of

these two, nationalism and race pride. From the founders of mechanical materialism downwards to Sir Arthur Keith and Professor Elliot Smith, racialism, the belief that some human groups are superior to the members of the other groups in the possession of certain innate mental and moral qualities, has persisted in a way that is staggering. And there is yet another factor which encourages the prevalence of such vanities as the white peoples have imposed on the world by means of poison gas and hell-fire : the colossal devilishness of the few who control the means of production and the colossal stupidity of mankind as a whole.

It is incredible when you think of it ; it is incredible when you see it in practice as mass racial hysteria ; it is still more incredible when you realize that this perversion should be making the world insane before our eyes ; and that we shouldn't be able to do anything to check this vast insanity.

And yet an element of sanity persists even in this widespread insanity of the modern world. And that sanity is in the disillusioned gaze of the oppressed, awaking from the night of history to the dawn of a new consciousness.

Cedric Dover is a brilliant young Indian scientist born of Eurasian parents. At the age of seventeen he had broken through the handicaps imposed on him as a member of a "bastard" community to take charge of the Entomological section of the Zoological Survey of India and had already published various scientific papers, independently and in collaboration with Dr. N. Annandale, F.R.S. At eighteen he was secretary to the Asiatic Society of Bengal, and obtained a government scholarship to go to Edinburgh University. He worked for a time at the Natural History Museum, and then between 1926 and 1933, held senior research appointments in Malaya and India, where he extended his reputation as a biologist. Since then he has spent his time writing, studying, and travelling.

All those who have read the miniature autobiography which Professor T. H. Huxley appended as a sort of preface to his *Lectures and Essays* will recognize the urge of the passionate scientist to free himself from the frustrating disciplines of an institutional career. Besides which, in the case of Dover, were the difficulties of being able to say his say in the face of an officialdom which bases the whole façade of its benevolence on principles which this young scientist had come to question. The privations he has suffered, incidental to any genuine revolt against the established views of authority in the capitalist world and the hard fight he has had to put up to get a hearing, might be supposed to have embittered him. But his book reveals a generosity, a breadth of outlook, and a balanced power of reasoning, the more impressive because it does not insist too much on objectivity.

*Half-Caste* is thus a personal-impersonal treatise, both popular and scientific. On the former plane it disposes of the superficial idea of

race by showing that all the peoples of the world have, at one time or another, mixed with others and are, therefore, half-castes at the fortieth remove if not immediately. The "British race", for instance, is derived from the mixture of various invading peoples with an earlier wave of immigrants who peopled the swamps of what was once an uninhabited land, which the Greeks regarded as the hell to which the souls of the damned were consigned in recompense for their bad deeds. On the second, the scientific plane, after a detailed survey of the communities created by the mixture of coloured and white peoples, he shows the lack of coherence in the current definitions, and explodes the myth that the well-defined physical difference between various groups have mental and moral qualities which are dissolved or degraded by the intermingling of these groups. Not only that. By a realistic discussion of miscegenation in relation to the political and economic movements of the day he renders up an irrefutable argument for the encouragement of race mixtures irrespective of patriotism, and as one of the most important principles for the building up of a new social order.

A positive contribution of this character will have to be worked out more exhaustively in time. But Cedric Dover will be associated in our imaginations as a revolutionary and as one of the most courageous prophets of a new scientific humanism.

MULK RAJ ANAND

STUDIES IN MODERN ENGLISH POETRY. By BHAWANI SHANKAR. Students' Friends. Allahabad. 6s.

IN THE FIRST half of this book, Bhawani Shankar reviews the background and the influences which have affected the form and development of English poetry during the last half century and examines some of the tendencies which characterize its spirit. It is an ambitious task to attempt a discussion of even one of these considerations in some seventy pages, and in parts these early pages read like a publisher's announcement catalogue.

The author concludes quite justifiably that "modern poetry is the poetry of revolt" and that "to-day there is a small group of poets . . . conscious of a spiritual chaos and of disintegration all round. In these younger poets of to-day a note of revolt against the bourgeoisie 'the old gang', and the willingness to rebuild and remould, to reevaluate life and society is apparent". It is somewhat disappointing, therefore, to discover in the second section of this book, where the works of certain poets are viewed in detail to illustrate the main trend of modern poetry, a series of hackneyed observations on the works of Bridges, Masfield, Kipling, Hardy, A. E. Housman, etc., in fact all the "old gang" against whose standards, according to his own conclusions, modern poetry is in revolt.

MARIAN EVANS

## THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

THE RAILWAY AGE. By CYRIL BRUYN ANDREWS. Illustrated.  
Country Life. 12s. 6d.

WITH SOMETHING OF a shock one realizes that the railway, in England at all events, has become "period". The author reminds us vividly with plates and with a chapter on terminus-architecture. This handsome volume is a study of the early British railways, intended as is too modestly said to "give an appetite for further interest in the subject rather than in any way to be complete in itself". But it is far more thorough than trivial and beginning with the state of roads in eighteenth century England, the gradual growth of the first railways is examined. Most strikingly comes out the connection of the early lines with mining districts, most interesting is it to learn how long ago men experimented with drawing carts on rails; and most impressive are the engineering feats when it is realized with how little machinery they were accomplished. Though he does not come down to modern times, the author goes sufficiently into his subject to give not only a history but a picture of the effect the coming of the locomotives had on both neighbourhoods and men. Verily, this *was* the Railway Age, till now too near us for the literature and illustration it inspired to be appraised. Mr. Andrews, with ample quotation from contemporary pamphlets, songs, and journals, and with reproductions of more than one hundred prints, gives us the spirit as well as the story of the engine which is as emblematic of the nineteenth century as of ours is the aeroplane.

TREVOR JAMES

A LONDON HOME IN THE NINETIES. By M. VIVIAN HUGHES.  
Oxford University Press. Humphrey Milford. 7s. 6d.

AFTER READING THE record of her London schooldays last year many readers have been waiting impatiently for the next volume by Mrs. Hughes. This new book describes her experiences as teacher and head of a training department, as well as the first years of her married life. In 1893 she was chosen to represent Bedford College at the Chicago World's Fair and these pages, illustrated with her own sketches, are a vivid account of an Atlantic voyage in the nineties.

Mrs. Hughes seems to have sailed with the usual English unawareness that a new civilization had grown up in the States in just over a century. She remarks amusingly that her companions were astonished to find trains crossing the country exactly as in Europe. She was too interested in life and too eager for experience, to let any preconceived ideas spoil her impressions once she had landed. She makes us share the enthusiasm that led her to leave her train in a quite unknown district for the sake

of the view instead of giving us a dry account of what is now a historical event. We are as glad as she was, that she left the companion who thought more of her lost trunk than of seeing the world. Her pictures of Boston and of her days in New York where she left her steamer to rush on shore and bid good-bye to some American (it turned out to be a fruit stall vendor), are particularly delightful.

The next excursion was to Switzerland ; again she gives so fresh an account of that thousand times described country, that it is disappointing to learn that she has never since left England.

We shall look forward eagerly to the next instalment and to hearing from Mrs. Hughes how she reacted to the twentieth century. These are books not only for the old who remember, but for the young who want to know what life was like, for their parents and their grandparents.

BRYHER

VICTORIAN STREET BALLADS. Edited by W. HENDERSON.

Country Life. 7s. 6d.

AFTER AN HONEST and excellent introduction, these street-songs of men and women, "great in goodness or in vice", are classified under headings which are themselves typical ; Crime and Horror, Woman and Wine, Great Events and Little. The editor, knowing nearly all that there is to know on a subject shortly to become as much a matter of study as the Elizabethan pamphlets, generously passes on his knowledge. Glancing at *Drink To Me Only*, we light on a *Tarpauling Jacket* laudably more laconic than the more familiar, in its instructions to "let there be six sailors to carry me, let them be damnable drunk". *Penal Servitude for Mrs. Maybrick* ("she will not have to climb the golden stairs") and a verse from *Shocking Rape and Murder*—

" Her lover passing by that way  
Discovered her in tears,  
And when he found what had been done,  
He pulled the monster's ears " —

are interesting records of events less straightly dealt with by to-day's Sunday Press. Lighter sides of life are reflected in ballads on bloomers, the crinoline (to rhyme with "fine"), velocipedes, and the omnibus ("that welcomes all without a fuss"). It was then open, of the knife-board variety, and straw was supplied to keep passengers' feet warm, but the improvement on previous methods of travel can be gauged from "Stow'd snug in thee, I am where I would wish to be". These ballads, indeed, vented in verse as if by accident, give contemporary comments far more to the point than the period's minor poetry, which they make no pretence to be. Victoria is rounded on for presenting the tax-payers with so many children to support, *Lovely Albert* gets a dig (even "Vic, 'tis said, jumped out of bed and wopped him with

her night-cap"), and one seems to have foretastes of the *Daily Worker* in

"Forty thousand pounds at once she got,  
Likewise eight thousand yearly,  
The people will be taxed to pay  
To the Princess Royal dearly".

Further salutary reminders of what was going on are to be found in the ballads of the *Strike of the London Cabmen*, *The Bishop's See*, *Present Times*, or *eight shillings a week*. Much of the rhyming is funny, and the contemporary woodcuts which head the broadsheets and ballads have vigorous charm. But the book is not merely for the antiquarian or æsthete; it is indispensable for the student of history or literature who is a lover of life, and a note on contemporary typography increases the value of a book which is cheap at the price.

H. K. FISHER

GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH. By M. WILLSON DISHER. Illustrated. Bell. 15s.

THE RINGS ARE open to attack from all sides, and those which are most threatening to circus are the half-hearted and humorous. On the historical it is lucky, for it has so cultured a chronicler as Willson Disher. He knows his subject, be it clown, circus, or juvenile drama, and he knows how to write. The evocation of a child's visit to the circus in his first chapter will cause many to read on for sheer delight, though they may previously have known nothing of Louisa Woolford, E. T. White, Cartlich, and that "Mlle. Ella" who, for years a famous "equestrienne", was at last discovered to be a husband and father. But Willson Disher is neither a glamour-gossip nor a mere fact-gatherer. The facts and gossip are here—and remarkable some of them are; the elder Astley, on account of his tricks, being informed against for dealings with the devil; Ducrow, in 1814, acting at Covent Garden in a piece where the villain had to wear raw steak round his neck in the last scene so as to be gnawed to death; Dick Usher, as nineteenth century publicity, sailing the Thames in a tub drawn by geese; *Mazeppa*, apart from *Punch and Judy*, the most frequently acted piece in the world. But the book is first and foremost the history of Astley's, that thrice burnt-down home first of the "equestrian drama", then of the "leonine drama" and finally of the "zoological pantomime". In 1876, *Gulliver on his Travels*, or *Harlequin Robinson Crusoe* included in its cast ostriches, emus, pelicans, kangaroos, lions, and reindeer as well as "300 girls, 200 men, 200 children, 13 elephants, and 9 camels, besides 52 horses". The story of Astley's being also the biography of Philip and John Astley ("The Once Rose of Paris"), Andrew Ducrow and both Sangers, *Greatest Show On Earth* is in

essence a complete history of the nineteenth century circus. But the author's lively scholarship has made the book also indispensable to the student of that strange period in the theatre in particular, and of the times in general as well.

H. K. FISHER

## THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

HOT STRIP TEASE. By GEOFFREY GORER. The Cresset Press. 6s.

MR. GORER HAS analysed the American burlesque theatre, treating it as if it were an initiation or other ceremony of some Pacific island tribe. It is the first time, we think, that the customs of the so-called civilized world have been thus studied. The essentials of the "hot strip tease" are, that the performer disrobes in an absolutely prescribed manner, before an audience composed almost exclusively of men from the poorer sections of the city, who come alone and seldom in groups. It continues from *early morning* until late at night.

The author suggests that its popularity is probably due to the unconscious desire of the American male to revenge himself upon a woman-made culture. We doubt that this is so. Women have not made American civilization, in fact a number of them have told me that they feel safer almost anywhere in Europe than at home. The emphasis upon the protection of the female in American law goes back to pioneer days, when it was essential for settlers who had to work in distant fields, to know that their wives were safe. Like most conventions, the rule has persisted, long after the need for it has passed. It was a man-made law, however, too much fighting over females meant too few helpers for the harvest. The popularity of the burlesque is probably due far more to other factors than Mr. Gorer describes, there being neither dols nor old age pensions nor cheap medical services, the American worker far more than his European comrade, tends to postpone or avoid marriage. There is also the problem of workers who have left their own standards behind and have not had time enough to absorb those of America.

It is psychologically of great interest to find that in the comic acts, jokes about madness are third in order of popularity and that the audience appears to be familiar with clinical forms of insanity. It is true that the statistics for mental disorder in New York are extremely high.

The subsequent study of Harlem is as superficial as the study of the burlesque show is thorough. The discrepancy is in fact so great, that we suspect the book was suddenly lengthened to meet some objection as to size. Mr. Gorer found the Negroes intolerant of white visitors and split up into small and snobbish sections. Here he has confused



something common to the whole continent with one of its minorities. The surface of American life appears democratic; underneath it is often more insular than England and with less merging of the different classes. I have never found that the Negro groups were more or less exclusive than other parts of the city; my chief impressions after several separate visits to the States are of their great kindness and their determination to succeed economically in spite of incredible difficulties. Mr. Gorer is possibly right, however, in feeling that they are nearer to Europe in spirit than to native American thought.

The two short stories are probably true but not particularly local; they might equally well have happened in Liverpool or Marseilles.

The book will be of great interest to anthropologists but the account of Harlem should not be considered representative.

BRYHER

NEW WRITING. 4. Autumn, 1937. Edited by JOHN LEHMANN. Lawrence and Wishart. 6s.

JOHN LEHMANN'S TWICE-A-YEAR anthology of unpublished work has established itself as one of the three or four periodicals which no one interested in the writing of our time can afford to ignore. We look to it for international discoveries, for young writers feeling their way, and for the work of well-known progressive authors.

E. M. Forster contributes a descriptive-imaginative piece on the Paris Exhibition in which his quiet humour and adept style serve to propagate a genuine humanism. Then the ranks of the short-story writers are strengthened by two new recruits, Tom Burns and J. Brian Harvey. Burns writes of the proletariat, urban and rural, in a style which conveys the brutality of fact unviolently and unsentimentally, with admirable confidence. Harvey's story about an unemployed lad and a student, their political ideals and the girls they are in love with, is necessarily complex. If it wavers a little in outline, it is because it seeks to express an awakening sensitiveness to new relations, to the impulses and conflicts behind the slogans, the obdurate reality through which the slogans have to operate the process of social change. V. S. Pritchett's story is technically excellent; there is no hesitation in his deft character sketching. Willy Goldman, too, can differentiate his sweated garment-workers, so that we feel the sombre, stifling den he describes is really the stage of an intensely living drama.

The translated creative work, though in no case uninteresting, is not so outstandingly good in this number, I think, as in earlier. An exception must be made of Ignazio Silone's first-rate story of a Fascist spy, *The Fox*. From the Spanish, there is only a short poem by Lorca, and a dramatic masquerade by Rafael Dieste, a

fantasy somewhat reminiscent of the manner of Pio Baroja. It seems pale and a little insignificant beside the extracts from the diary of Alfred Kantorowicz covering the crucial days of the siege of Madrid last December. Of the Soviet writers, Sholokhov and Tikhonov revert to incidents of the Civil War, and Djavakhishvili, a leading Georgian novelist, makes a story in a rather rambling and unconvincing way about a White emigré's reconciliation with the Soviet regime. Though literature may not always keep step with events, one would have liked to see some reflection of the immense constructive triumphs of the last eight years in the U.S.S.R.

Of the poems, the most important are three by John Cornford, written just before he was killed in Spain at the age of twenty-one. Important, not because they are the last work of an heroic and brilliant man, but because they are the first poems written out of an understanding of Marxism; they are dialectically conceived, not abstract-revolutionary like those of his older contemporaries. Something of the same spirit is found in Margot Heinemann's poems, three poems included here. Writing to those who deplore the loss of a valuable life, she says :

Yes, you'd like an army all of Sidney Cartons,  
The best world made conveniently by wasters, second rates,  
Someone that we could spare,  
And not the way it has to be made,  
By the loss of our best and bravest everywhere.

EDGELL RICKWORD

NEW LETTERS IN AMERICA. Edited by HORACE GREGORY.  
W. W. Norton. New York. \$2.00.

THIS BOOK IS alive and it is new. It marks the third stage in the evolution of the American renaissance. The first stage was pre-War, classic, an individual revolt, when poets such as H. D. and Marianne Moore found a new way to see things as well as to say them. The chaos of the post-War years followed, a time of anger and resentment, but though such authors as Hart Crane and Dos Passos were bolder in experiment, there seemed little progression; the reader had the impression that they were choked with their own violence. *New Letters* gives us movement again, another step in development, with a different method and a different approach to life.

Mr. Gregory's introduction is such an excellent analysis that it is a pity to quote from it; there is not an unnecessary sentence. He insists upon the importance of the spirit of the time and it is impossible to read the stories without noticing how deeply psychoanalysis and Marx have altered contemporary thought. They dominate the creative moods even of those writers who fight arduously to escape from them.

It is unjust to single out for praise, stories or poems for the general

level is high and in such a book, personal preferences count for much. In the English section, Mr. Hampson has a grim record of the exploitation of labour that is art as well as observation and Mr. Auden's sketch, *Alfred*, is included, which is probably familiar to many readers. I liked Mr. Herring's *Aurochs*, because although the fundamental basis of the story would always be the same, it is possible to build up two or three different approaches to it, the sentences really being reflexions of thoughts and not static images.

The poems of Harold Rosenberg and *Northern Sea Voyage* by Tony Palmer were sharp and clear and without that cluttering of ornament that makes some modern verse seem like a Dutch painting, the detail being more important than the whole. The most ambitious and successful poem is Muriel Rukeyser's *The Cruise*; the single one of Marya Zaturenska is, as always, perfect within its range. Yet many readers may prefer the work of Etta Blum or Kerker Quinn. One cannot tag them with stars like a guide book.

It is the same with the stories; I liked myself Eleanor Clark's *Call Me Comrade*, but I could not say that it was better than *The Sea And Its Shore* by Elizabeth Bishop. The advantage of such a collection as this is, that the reader may keep in touch with a dozen writers and find, as well, the work that is nearest to his own personal preference. It is hardly true to say that many of the contributors are still unknown for I found few names whose writings were unfamiliar.

*New Letters* is an essential purchase for English readers. This volume is an excellent guide at the cost of about nine or ten shillings to contemporary thought across the Atlantic. Subsequent numbers are promised in spring and autumn.

ERNEST HUDSON

THE CHANGING SCENE. By ARTHUR CALDER-MARSHALL. Chapman and Hall. 10s. 6d.

THE PUBLISHERS INFORM us that this "is a survey of the social landscape of to-day, as compared with that of a quarter of a century ago," and a quarter of a century ago it might be added Mr. Marshall was in his nonage. This fact appears apparent to me throughout this book, as one reads the author on Politics, the Press, the Arts, the Empire, our attitude to foreigners, diversions upon Broadcasting, the Films, the Social Scene, Society with the large S, Crime, Sport, etc., etc. Mr. Marshall appears to take a hard squint at life, a hurried, impatient squint it might be added, and though the result is at times clever, sound, at the same time one feels that the rich seed of experience might have given the writer a steadier hand. Unsteady it is, especially as one reads his chapter on Literature and The Social Sense. Mr. Marshall is good on the Films, but

hopeless when he deals with workers. Why do so many middle class writers, apparently sounding the authoritative voice, reveal such ignorance when it comes to dealing with purely working-class psychology? I have often wondered on that.

JAMES HANLEY

BAGDAD SKETCHES. By FREYA STARK. Illustrated. Murray.  
12s. 6d.

I WANT SO much to like Miss Stark's books. They are familiar, because I lived as a child in the Near East and her prose is lovely. It is difficult to describe a landscape without its becoming a catalogue or just boring, but when the author writes of "yellow slabs of sunset shallows when the water buffaloes come down to drink after the day", or of the coming of spring to Bagdad, there is no wish to skip a single word. Only, throughout all the author's work we are conscious of a gap, a gulf between the pre-War understanding that could accept inequality without protest, and now, when even those most violently opposed to democracy are caught up in a gigantic economic struggle that will end, whoever be victor, in a totally other world. Miss Stark would have been happier in 1910 than in the East of 1937.

There is a witty chapter upon the regulations governing European and American ladies in Iraq, issued by the British Civil Service. Unfortunately it is not an amusing paper that some tiny government in a mountain state might have issued in an unfamiliar language. It is the tragic proof that the official mind is incapable of understanding the twentieth-century world. It explains, though it does not excuse, our present foreign policy. Only, it is not laughter that is required but anger. What can the educated Arab think if he reads such orders?

The book is not a record of travel, it is literature. There are descriptions of finding a house in Bagdad, of Sumerian smells, of the river, of Arab scholars, that are full of real understanding, not only of the East but of its history and religious literature. What keeps one reader, at least, from enthusiastic admiration, is Miss Stark's wistfulness about the British public school tradition. This, and not machinery or progress, is the destructive force in English influence to-day.

BRYHER

THE 1937 NEW YORKER ALBUM. By ARNO, THURBER, GALBRAITH, and many others. Hamish Hamilton. 10s. 6d.

YOU DO OR you don't. If you don't, you might just as well read *Punch*. This is one of the few books about which there can be plenty of opinions but no argument. The opinions will be as to which is "best". We ourselves always fell for the polar bear cub saying to its parents on the ice-floe "I don't care what you say, I'm cold". But that may have

been because we had previously missed Thurber's man and wife, one on all fours balancing a reading lamp on her neolithic head, the other prancing round, while one of two guests says "I don't know them either, but there may be some very simple explanation". There is also the very nice Eskimo who built a Delicatessen store round his chance find of a dead whale, not to mention the hound that was an atheist or the man who went to the invisible menders and was mended so much you couldn't see his clothes at all. Then there is the conjuror's assistant who, ready or not, never missed a cue, and the young man who wondered if the mouse were *meant* to be in the pin-table—but why go on? You know them all. You know, too, that some of them are on "the same old thing". You know, too, that the ferocity with which that is attacked (how Arno hates sex) leaves lots free to be straight about everything else. As we said before, you either know or you don't. If you don't, let Santa Claus help you. If you do, just be reminded that the *New Yorker* makes even more effect as an annual than it does as a weekly, and that this annual has more pictures than before, allied with the least and most cogent letterpress. What a book—but then, what a paper.

R. H.

THIS ENGLAND. Selected by V. S. PRITCHETT, with Illustrations by Low. *New Statesman and Nation*. 1s.

MRS. BEE FEELING rather tired, because she had been up all night, painting the linoleum in her kitchen red, white, and blue; fasting brides exhibited encased in blocks of ice at Blackpool; Brighton worried because, owing to shyness of young women, the rôle of Lady Godiva in a pageant would have to be taken by a man in pink tights and a yellow wig; Monsignor Brown of Hanwell observing "I dislike giving any lad a caning. Every time I feel sick and have to take a nip of whisky afterwards"; the bishop who "for light relief lunches occasionally at the Athenæum, but his heart is in the Church" . . . here is England unconsciously satired by the most English. Easy fun certainly, this selection from the *New Statesman's* regular feature, but illuminating picture of Blimpdom and, in its lesser way, as interesting a document as the *New Yorker* and *Mass Observation*. With illustrations by Low, it is at the price the perfect Christmas card or small present.

R. H.

MASS-OBSERVATION; a Day Survey of 12th May. Edited by HUMPHREY JENNINGS and CHARLES MADGE. 12s. 6d.

DESCRIPTION OF THE BOOK.—Over two hundred Observers sent in reports to form a survey of May the Twelfth. These reports have been edited by Humphrey Jennings and Charles Madge, with the assistance

of T. O. Beachcroft, Julian Blackburn, William Empson, Stuart Legg, and Kathleen Raine. Mass Observation began early this year, when fifty people in different parts of the country agreed to co-operate in making observations on how they and other people spend their daily lives. There are now observers all over the country, they include "coalminers, factory hands, shopkeepers, housewives, hospital nurses, schoolmasters, scientists and technicians". These Observers report on what happened to them on the twelfth of each month. They receive a "directive" from the organizers, and those previously unacquainted with this work will find portions of Mass Observing in LIFE AND LETTERS TO-DAY, No. 9.

L.A.Z. (A woman reader).—I meant to "observe", but didn't. So I started off a little antagonistic. Also, I felt it sounded rather amateur; I was surprised to find how well the book had been arranged. I think that impressed me at least as much as the actual "observations". Of course, there is a wonderful directness about the contributions. One really seems to hear the people speaking, and to look into their lives—like passing backyards in a train. But all this seems to take on a further life from the way it is arranged—preparations (I never realized before how much of *every* day is prepared for us in advance), individual reactions, national activities. I felt nearly everyone was honest, and not trying to be clever. Nothing seemed to get in the way of one receiving impressions. The book gives me a new idea of what words-on-paper (not "writing") can do, and I read it again and again for the sense it gives me of what was happening all round, of what we were part of, on that day and I suppose really are, all the time. I hadn't thought of things in this way before, but it comes very congenially.

B.X.R. (An "Observer").—10 a.m. Mass-Observation arrived. I am one of three per cent to reply. Triumph. Unable to concentrate further upon work, read steadily till lunch time. First impressions:—how few thought about the political meaning of the coronation and how many were compelled through a sense of guilt to listen to the radio. (Minor accidents or disagreements forced people to places where a wireless was available at the precise moment the broadcast started.) 12.30. Read out bits over lunch, was reproved by "non-observer", being told meal-times were intended for food, not books. Pointed out, with other observers, that if non-observer were "in", he would be reading too. Laughed too much to continue, particularly over dame offered bird-seed by mistake for candy, in conventional home. It gave the room to pattern of the sofa. 2 p.m. Argument with friend as to dangers of method and agreed that it was probably possible only in England, where there is, on the whole, less neighbour surveillance than in States or abroad. 2.30. Obligated to go out and lent book regretfully to other observer. 9 p.m. Regained book and read. 11 p.m. Great mental conflict as wished to continue but feared to disturb others with light. Decided that it would

be useless to write or read novels when the raw stuff of a hundred stories was thus available. Glad to be among the first to join the movement.

C.D. (A Journalist).—Experienced resentment at “untrained observers” doing my job. Then realized some of them might be trained. Realized, also, that anyway, a lot of them did it better (a surprise), others worse (a relief). So felt more friendly. Was vastly interested in the composite picture given of coronation. Would also be interested to see what the editors of this volume left out (does anyone “observe” them, by the way?). I like the woman’s comment on Selfridges’—“it’ll cost ’em something to take down”. Sense here that gloating over destruction to which my profession caters in its worse forms. No interest in what it had cost to put up—or rather, there was too much and the woman was revengeful. So wanted to know what it’d cost to take down. Realize I am getting a bit self-conscious about my own reporting on this reporting, and close down. But think others get so too, in this book, though I know that’s half the point.

R.H. (Editor).—I was amused at the general assumption in popular press that “mass observation” means “spying on others”. Have we such guilty consciences? And don’t we know enough about people, writers and otherwise, to know that, given the chance, most of them will be busy mainly in displaying themselves? My prevailing impression from these reports is of a blessed full-circle from literate self-consciousness. Naturally, some observers seize the chance to write unduly about themselves; the one thing one feels sorry about is that they don’t realize their place in the scheme of the book. The rest, usually those without cultural pretension, record naturally and beat at their own game a class of writer from whom, as editor, I most frequently suffer,—the neo- or pseudo-proletarian, who thinks that outline of social-problem plot stands for a short story. It is a by-product of this book to discount that. More generally speaking, by virtue of its complex completeness, it seems to me the record of May 12th that counts most, and I like the pointing given by the editors on such items as the frequency with which paper is mentioned, etc. Newspapers seem empty and many other kinds of writing plain stupid by comparison.

A VISION. By W. B. YEATS. Macmillan. 15s.

THERE ARE POETS who need neither introduction nor interpretation and poets whose work, for some at least, is enhanced by exegesis. When twelve years ago, in justification of his early emotionalism, Mr. Yeats wrote “Are we not always doomed to see our world as the Stoics foretold, consumed by fire and water?” he was jubilant in the discovery that his juvenalia possessed the wider appeal. Then foreseeing possibly how easily these elements resolve into smoke and mist, without abandoning the Cabala and the Upanishads, he allowed himself explorations into the systems of Plotinus, Berkeley, and Hegel. The present



volume is an expanded exposition of these eclectic researches and the story of many spiritual adventures.

It opens with a characteristic and almost breezy letter to Ezra Pound, but it is in the Five Books that we get the universal Yeats detached from his Irishry and Twilight, recording his revelations with admirable precision and assiduous scholarship. Whatever the value of the book as a compendium of philosophy (bearded and beardless pundits alike will be breathless as they ponder the gyrations of the Great Wheel which Mr. Yeats relates to the undulations of the creative mind and the whole course of history), its importance to the poet's disciples and devotees cannot be exaggerated. The texture of the prose is rich with a vitality and variety as different from the earlier essays as is, say, the diffusive amber of a Turner sunscape from a Blake engraving.

THOMAS GOOD

INVITATION TO THE BALLET. By NINETTE DE VALOIS. Bodley Head. 12s. 6d.

ENGLISH BALLET is in danger of being treated "like a General Election" so Miss de Valois, at times vehemently Irish and at others phlegmatically English, stands at the poll with a plea for a reformation in the theatre which she rightly considers the true basis of the ballet. Manager, audience, English dancer, and critic are in turn put in the limelight plainly for all to see. There is much that has been said before, but little that cannot be taken to heart again, especially by the balletomane who is thoroughly dissected in an excellent chapter on "The Audience".

Diaghileff was the Genesis of the *European*, but the national *English* ballet is in the middle stage of development and only remotely influenced by the Continent. Therefore, all depends on present environment and the future which, with Miss de Valois as the guiding genius, seems at least an omen for the generation to come. Her book will have a pyramid appeal to all from the artist to the audience. Purposely written for a large interested public, it will naturally mean less to the sides supporting the apex than to the base, for rarely does the artistic experience of the author translate itself into words; but when it does her pages come to life as something which dancer and audience can read with equal profit. The book is well put together, aptly illustrated with good photographs, and rounded off with an informative bibliography and an index.

E. G. CROOKALL

## BIOGRAPHY

MEN OF MATHEMATICS. By E. T. BELL. Gollancz. 12s. 6d.

CAN YOU IMAGINE six hundred and fifty pages about mathematicians being exciting? They often strike others as being dull individuals, but those that people these pages seem to have as exciting



adventures as any experienced by William, the famous school-boy. The author must be given full credit for his choice and handling of material—he writes with plenty of pace.

The ordinary conception of a mathematician is rudely shattered: “Quite a few were soldiers by profession; others went into mathematics from theology, the law, and medicine, and one of the greatest was as crooked a diplomat as ever lied for the good of his country. A few have had no profession at all.” “Some lived celibate lives, usually on account of economic disabilities, but the majority were happily married and brought up their children in a civilized, intelligent manner. The children, it may be noted in passing, were often gifted far above the average.”

Except for the introductory chapter, the whole book is given up to biographies. A little mathematics is referred to and quoted at times, so much as is necessary to appreciate its author’s character or position, but it is so small in bulk that the unmathematical reader need have no qualms about tackling the book while the well-educated mathematician will derive not only pleasure but profit from this work. The subject has advanced so far and so systematically that it is expounded in most textbooks with little or no reference to its founders. The university student hears of Bernoulli’s theorem, Lagrangian equations, or the Hamiltonian function, and he may get the impression that such men happened to make merely isolated discoveries—this book will quickly dispel such an illusion.

J. O. WISDOM

COMING SIR. The autobiography of a waiter. By DAVE MARLOWE. Harrap. 8s. 6d.

INTERESTING FROM SEVERAL angles, this book is, in the first place, good writing and comes from one who has served no apprenticeship to the craft. When his articles appeared in the *New Statesman*, one had the impression that his “close-up” of high life (or low) on a night out, had the purpose of showing up Our Betters. But in reading his book as a whole, it is evident that as man, as a waiter, as an artist, in all his roles, he has contempt without indignation. He finds his livelihood (precariously it is true), and his fun and excitement within his trade.

Here, for all who read, the strip unrolls, exposing a fatuous, leering world, wealth flowing for imbeciles, the law broken at peril for unstable gain in order that a few should not be denied their *Scotch*! In olden times there used to be talk of the Seven Deadly Sins. The writer parades them in a modern version on a whoopee cruise, in speakeasy, at the Charity Ball. They could not be counted as seven and perhaps not even as sins. The spectacle is rather more appalling than the description of the conditions of living which the waiter has to endure. It is an unpretty, parasitic world and this writer’s mirror is not flattering to it. Organized and concerted action by those who serve the meat and drink

and respond obsequiously to the commands, would achieve some mitigation of their miseries and injustices. But at present hotel workers are bound to the machine of luxury and seem incapable of securing decent terms of work.

Mr. Marlowe touches on those questions but he draws our attention away from them to the adventures of liquor smuggling, raided speak-easies, banditry, and scandal. He has had his bad times but he has also had his fun and enjoyed it with zest. He has been a fine observer and he gives some lively portraits of his gang and the world in which they thrive. His achievement is to have succeeded in remaining in the game whilst being at the same time a sensitive onlooker.

RHODA HIND

GEORGIAN ADVENTURE. The Autobiography of DOUGLAS JERROLD. Collins. 15s.

MR. DOUGLAS JERROLD is a rebel, whether one considers him as conservative, business man, soldier, or Christian—and he has pretensions to all these titles. He writes in the boastful roystering style which prominent Roman Catholic writers, posing before a Protestant audience as the last champions of Latin civilization and Christianity, have so successfully got away with since the days of the *New Witness*. There are a great many phrases typical of the "Christian" who neither fears the flames of a medieval Hell, nor believes in the teaching of Christ, but rests confident that, in a world of philistines, he has God up his sleeve. "I am a good liar," "It seems to me then, and how damnably right I have been proved, that the future of religion and freedom, the future of mere decency, for that matter, in Europe was bound up simply with the question whether this thing was to be tolerated or no. It is no use recalling men to Christ in London and burning those who have heard Him call in Spain." As the book proceeds, God's features resemble more and more those of General Franco; and, of course, Mr. Jerrold cashes in on English ignorance of continental catholicism to imply that the Pope and all "the centres of civilization" support this view.

A great deal of snobbery, class-feeling, drink, enormous meals, high jinks, and high life are bound up in an appropriate cheery aura of chivalry. Yet it would be unfair to dismiss Mr. Jerrold as a disgruntled ex-Radical diehard who has been pushed from the army into publishing and from one political allegiance to another. For he has a genuine grievance which, beneath all the rhetoric and boisterous activity of his life, is its true theme: he is an intelligent man, more capable in war than his bungling superiors, with better taste in literature than his successful and vulgar rivals, with a far profounder grasp of moral problems in politics than most politicians either of the Right or Left.

His trouble seems to be that he has identified his own just bitterness and discontent with all the evils of the contemporary world. Although he can see that other politicians are racketeers and liars, it is not lying which he objects to (he can play that game himself, as the chapter on Franco's Spain shows), it is stupidity and vulgarity which affront his own cleverness. Thus his book suffers from extraordinary defects of laziness: he is content simply to undermine his opponents' positions and then go no further: again and again he exposes stupidity only to substitute for it some piece of rhetoric. He is always satisfied with the clever phrase. He is continually scoring debating points. He is continually pulling out dubious but succulent plums from the pudding of his own past.

Mr. Jerrold's last chapter, entitled the Last Crusade, is an account of a journey taken by him and Bengal Lancer—Crusaders All—in Franco's territory. Nothing could be more unsullied than Mr. Jerrold's view of Franco's Spain. Just a few Italians, he saw, but the talk of there being four divisions is "grossly exaggerated". As for the Generalissimo, Mr. Jerrold has looked into his "translucent eyes". The Moors? "Their numbers, again, are fantastically exaggerated." A good sample of his reasoning is the statement, "Why did the Reds hold Madrid? If there were a Red Spain they would have abandoned Madrid long ago; but there is no Red Spain." This is only matched by the superb, "The action of the generals who saved Spain, and Europe, in July, 1936, was not of course a military revolt." (The use of "of course" in Chester-Belloc English is symptomatic: cf. Mr. Jerrold's, "The world unrest has nothing, of course, to do with dictatorships and democracies.")

Even the most devout Diehard Rebel will fail to find this book as satisfying as it promises (see Mr. Wyndham Lewis's review in *The Spectator*). The truth is that Mr. Jerrold's life must give rise to misgivings for both friend and enemy. It is impossible really to discover where he stands, it is impossible to explain why he has done the various things which he has done. He himself seems to imagine that in the course of life he has learned a certain degree of wisdom from experience, and that he now "knows something of men". I do not believe that even the most sympathetic reader will accept this view. To the Left Wing reader and reviewer, not sympathetic to Mr. Jerrold's point of view, but stimulated often by his powers of destructive criticism and analysis and impressed by a certain moral seriousness which leads to bitterness but not to truth, Mr. Jerrold will appear as a symptom or a collection of symptoms of the reactionary mentality. This book is really the Case Book of a Reactionary: if ever there is a series entitled Masterpieces of Political Pathology, I hope it will be included.

STEPHEN SPENDER

NOW I'M SIXTEEN. By DOUGLAS POPE. Dent. 8s. 6d.

AUTOBIOGRAPHIES OF THE adventurous young are by no means rare. Those who have climbed mountains, sailed downstream in collapsible canoes, hunted foxes, or indulged in other similar activities, have often recorded their impressions in book form. It is, however, unusual to come across the story of a normal boy who lives in Kent with his working-class family, goes to school, rides a bicycle, helps with the hop picking, and stores up fireworks for Guy Fawkes day. Established autobiographers and others who have reached years of discretion, will, no doubt, be resentful, when Douglas Pope informs them in his opening chapter that now, on his sixteenth birthday, with no settled job, he has decided to write his autobiography, and prove that although he has spent comparatively few years in this world, they have been just as exciting and worth writing about, as any greater number of years spent doing whatever it is that those older than himself do. Remarks will probably be made on the precocity of adolescence, and it is to the originators of these remarks, that *Now I'm Sixteen* should prove an excellent eye opener.

The boy's narrative is remarkably free from self-consciousness and precocity, and he writes in such an attractive and straightforward style, that we quickly sympathize with his outlook, and reconstruct for ourselves the atmosphere, background, and episodes in his life. At no time do we feel that he is trying to be clever, or saying what he thinks will impress his readers. It is, apart from being an entertaining record of what goes on in a growing boy's brain, a revealing study of working people, and the routine and problems of family life in a small Kent village.

PERDITA PENARTH

ELIZABETH FRY. By JANET WHITNEY. Harrap. 12s. 6d.

THE NEW BIOGRAPHY of Elizabeth Fry leaves us with the impression that although progress exists, creative endeavour is unusually blocked by human obstruction. We do not execute people for theft, and transportation has been abolished, yet a recent article in the *Manchester Guardian* on prison reform, describes conditions nearly as bad in their way as those that existed at Newgate. Worms in the porridge, cockroaches in the dinner, too small socks for working parties, the flashing of an electric torch at intervals during the night upon a sleeping prisoner's eyes, constant bullying by warders (always denied by authority because it is naturally impossible for a prisoner to prove it), these are as bad, considering that we have had a century of supposed reforms, as the prison where Mrs. Fry gave her readings. The eighteenth

century valued life less than we do, and was careless about ventilation even in its palaces. At least the prisoners then were allowed to live together, with few warders and without rules.

Elizabeth's childhood and youth, her early religious struggles and her marriage are well described, with emphasis upon the struggle between her common sense and desire to be of practical help, and her three great fears of death, of the dark, and the sea. It is natural, however, that those chapters are the most interesting that describe Newgate and her struggles to alter its conditions. She was one of the first to insist that prevention was better than punishment, a lesson the majority of people have yet to learn. Perhaps it will be forced upon them only by economic necessity; psychological help in childhood is far cheaper than keeping up prisons. The author has been wise to keep her story clear and illustrated with many quotations from Elizabeth's journals, for the historical background to this period is complex and likely to bewilder the general reader.

More space might have been given to the great disadvantages suffered by women in those days. It was possibly only the known strictness of the Quaker discipline and its unfashionable dress that permitted Mrs. Fry to begin her first Bible readings. Yet the final comment upon the average attitude to reform is the story that she was visited by a committee of her church, to reprove her for not having brought up her own children strictly enough. Is there not always the tendency to make a safe religious ritual the excuse for inertia?

ERNEST HUDSON

BROKEN WATER. By JAMES HANLEY. Chatto and Windus. 10s. 6d.

THIS AUTOBIOGRAPHY READS like one of Mr. Hanley's better novels. It tells of his going to sea as a boy, of his first voyage, of his service on a troopship, with the Canadian army, and finally of his struggle to establish himself as a writer while working on the railway. The writing on the whole is more careful than has been Mr. Hanley's custom. By far the best passages are in the description of his first sea-voyage, but still much of the book is spoilt by over-writing. Indeed the whole book suffers from a kind of aimlessness. It is not one of those egocentric studies full of anecdotes of people met and mutual compliments, designed to fill in a lurid or flattering portrait of the author, nor is it the story of a lifelong quest, nor a catalogue of hairbreadth adventures. Its fault and its resources are best described in a quotation from itself: "Beneath the picture that gladdens the eye, quickens the pulse, in the midst of all the riot of colour and sound, endeavour and courage and strength, lay greyness."

RANDALL SWINGLER

## ANTHROPOLOGY

TOTEMICA : A SUPPLEMENT TO TOTEMISM AND EXOGAMY. By SIR JAMES GEORGE FRAZER. Macmillan. 25s.

TOTEMISM IS A fascinating subject. The name itself—derived from a north American Indian word—has a barbaric flavour ; the custom has a bewildering character, assuming by turns the form of a philosophy of nature, a religion, a fertility magic, a dietetic schedule, an organization of marriage rules, even a moral code. In essentials totemism involves the treatment of many kinds of natural objects—stars and winds, animals, plants, insects—as if they were allied to man, distributing them systematically among groups of people, who call them kinsfolk and act towards them in a ceremonious way while they turn them to account. For an Australian aborigine of the Kangaroo totem the kangaroo is not just a marsupial to be hunted down and eaten ; it is a brother, linked with his ancestor who, as like as not, bore the character of both this animal and man. His is the privilege of carrying out ceremonies to increase the number of kangaroos, he tells mythic tales of how he and they originated in company, and he points to sacred spots, water-holes, rocks, and trees, where his ancestor rested or finally disappeared, as mute witness to the truth of the story. Often he does not eat of the kangaroo himself, but leaves it to others of his tribe who do not share this communion ; sometimes he eats just a little first of all, as a token of his special relationship to it.

But totemism takes many forms. In Australia alone the variants of the theme are too complex for a reviewer to mention, and have been responsible for numerous anthropological headaches. Some totems are edible ; others are not ; some, common animals and birds, are incorporated into the scheme of many tribes, while others, like ghosts, babies, and laughing boys, are used by only a few ; some are inherited by children from their parents, others are assigned to the child from dreams, or from places where the mother has been in pregnancy ; some mark out kinship divisions of the people, others are linked with the two sexes.

Not least interesting is the totemic art of the aborigines of the north-west of Australia, particularly the curious rock-paintings of the Kimberley district described by Sir George Grey a century ago and recently in more detail by Professor Elkin. Human figures, or heads only, with eyes and nose but no mouth, drawn in charcoal, pipe-clay, and red ochre, and associated with representations of fruit, animals, and birds, make up these primitive picture galleries. Their purpose, however, is by no means purely æsthetic. They are totemic in character. The natives believe that if the heads of the figures are touched up with

charcoal or other material rain will fall, nature will yield her increase and women will have babies. Elkin records that the faith of the men with whom he visited the rock-pictures was strengthened by the fact that one of them retouched the eyes of a figure when he was there, and though it was in the midst of the dry season, a light shower of rain fell shortly afterwards! The savage too has his miracles.

Outside the Australian field there is still more diversity of totemic belief and practice—so much so that one prominent American anthropologist has proposed that we should abandon the idea of trying to bring all the phenomena under one name. But this view has not commanded general agreement. In Melanesia totemism commonly takes the form of an injunction upon a person to refrain from injuring, killing, and eating the type of living thing associated with him, and from marrying persons who share the same taboos. Elsewhere, however, as in the Polynesian island of Tikopia, it consists primarily in the special concern which each group shows in one kind of vegetable food, as coco-nut, yam, or breadfruit, the idea that each is the head or body of their respective deity, and the performance of ceremonies to secure the fertility of these food-plants.

All this and much more is in Sir James Frazer's new book, which summarizes the evidence on this fascinating topic accumulated since the publication of his classic four volumes of *Totemism and Exogamy* in 1910. In the main it is a citation of the material collected by many field anthropologists, often with lengthy quotation, and as in all Frazer's work the summaries are done with great care so as to give accurately the original writer's own views. The result is a valuable compendium, written in the modest, flawless style we have learned to expect from the author of *The Golden Bough*.

What the reader will regret in it, perhaps, is the absence of any detailed expression of Sir James Frazer's own views. Only incidentally do we learn that Sir James still holds to his former opinion that totemism was an earlier social institution in Australia than exogamy, that he regards the totemic increase ceremonies as purely magical in character and not religious, and that in the early history of humanity he sees an age of magic as having preceded an age of religion. With these theories his name has been long associated, and they have given a stimulus to much later research by other scientists. But a final chapter giving a restatement of the whole problem of totemism, and the author's views upon it in the light of the fresh evidence and theory in the last quarter of a century would have added to the value of the book.

RAYMOND FIRTH



## NOVELS

WIDE BOYS NEVER WORK. By ROBERT WESTERBY. Barker. 7s. 6d.

A GOOD NOVEL on the greyhound racket has been long overdue. Nowhere do crime and corruption parade themselves so blatantly as at "the dogs"; nowhere is the disintegrity of the times more clearly revealed. The material is as raw as any muck-raker could wish, and, for those writers who enjoy figure-of-eighting on the thin ice of propriety, rich with promise. It's amazing that the temptation has been so long withstood.

Mr. Westerby, following up his tough-stuff boxing novel with this story of a racing-tout, fills the gap but does not make the most of its opportunities. His book gives the impression of having been written in a bar-room in a race against closing-time. It is lusty, fast, and a little hoarse. Its perceptions are vivid and direct, but at times carelessly selected. The characters, too, are over-simplified, while flashy devices for holding attention, like the description of a young man urinating in his prospective mother-in-law's parlour, are rather too abundant. It could, in fact, have been a better book; but the story is none the less well worth attention.

Jim Bankley, focal point of the novel, is a typical product of an overripe industrialism. A sturdy lad, hating his job in the factory, hating the narrowness of his home-life, he varies small-town monotony by buying his clothes at the local tout-fitters, imitating Sam Goldwyn's tough guys and losing his wages at the dog-track. After a row at the works, he comes to London and gets a job in the showroom of a shady car-dealer, placed there for devious purposes by the race-gang-leader whose bodyguard he has joined. Quickly he goes through the cycle of a race-tough's life—petty trickery, robbery with violence, mob-fights, boozing, whoring, gambling: Mr. Westerby describes it all unsparingly, with a furious vigour. But Jim is not quite ruthless enough to stay the pace; the gang drops him, and we leave him returning to his home, chastened for a time, but still a Wide Boy in essence, and unfitted for civilized life. "Well, all right," asks the author. "You don't like Jim Bankley? And neither do I. But how could he be any different?" It's a question worth asking, for Jim Bankleys are increasing in numbers.

MARK BENNEY

RAINBOW FISH. By RALPH BATES. Cape. 8s. 6d.

MR. RALPH BATES' *Rainbow Fish* is a volume of four long stories and each is set in widely differing localities, the Aegean Sea, Paris and the South of France, Spain, and Pimlico. Each story, too, is handled in a different manner. The *Rainbow Fish*, which is about a group of



outcasts engaged in sponge fishing, is savage, muscular, and essentially masculine in treatment. *Dead End of the Sky*, about studio life in Paris, has a vaguish, unreal flavour about it, which is, of course, the atmosphere of studio life anywhere. The characters never seem to come to life in this story, but that is perhaps the fault of the characters and not the writer. *Death of a Virgin* is harsh and strongly coloured as any Spanish picture and the characters in this story have the same kind of life as pictures in primitive art, vigorous, but strange and bizarre. But *The Other Land*, about life as lived in Pimlico by a very humble and to all appearances a very *dull* set of people, was to me, personally, the most living of these stories. It had a simplicity and clarity which was good to read.

JAMES HANLEY

THE SOUTH WIND OF LOVE. By COMPTON MACKENZIE. Rich and Cowan. 8s. 6d.

THIS IS A good novel according to conventional pattern. It would have been a better book had the beginning been omitted. Mr. Mackenzie's intention was clearly to re-create the type of conversation common in 1912 but arguments as to religious convictions and abstract theories of marriage sound further away to-day than a seventeenth century sermon. The real story begins with the later, simply written portion, set against a background of Greece during the War.

It is Greece that is the centre of the book. The author knows the islands, each of them different, a little lovelier, a little clearer still, than anywhere in the south. He knows the secret service and he knows Greek politics. Perhaps there would be no war in Spain to-day had we not so misunderstood and neglected the Athenian situation in 1917.

The young and revolutionary have often attacked the English public school tradition. This book is important because the author at first accepted that tradition to the full and only gradually realized what it had become when red tape paralysed action, people died and ships were sunk. The final chapters could be taken as a history of any modern conference.

LAMBERT STONE

ALLI'S SON. By MAGNHILD HAALKE. Gollancz. 7s. 6d.

IN SIGRID UNDSET's opinion this book is powerful and important, but it is difficult to say just where she found its power or importance. She might have qualified her praise and said that it could have been powerful and might have been important had there been some small light to show up the shadow, for shadow without light is merely drab and meaningless.

It is interesting, however, being a clear and promising indication of Magnhild Haalke's descriptive capabilities. The island of Bekkeröia

is a living place, the sea cuts it away from the not-so-far distant mainland with a satisfying inevitability; the people, so crude, cruel, brutal, and therefore pathetic, live also, but the only relieving bits of colour, Elling's gift of poetry and his imaginative growing mind, are treated so harshly that the book cheats itself out of its one opportunity for contrast.

The translation might, with comfort, have been freer and less painstaking and although the characters stand out like skeletons in a desert, the reader is jerked from description to description of them until the impression is confusion.

The book is written undoubtedly with some terrific motive and is therefore ultra painful to the reader but probably very beneficial to the writer. One suffers with each and through each character in turn . . . yet one cannot help feeling that something greater . . . something really great, could have been done with them.

M. D. COLE

THE MAN WHO STARTED CLEAN. By T. O. BEACHCROFT.  
Boriswood. 7s. 6d.

THIS STORY IS so extraordinarily satisfactory that the young man Edmund and the people who form the pattern of his background seem to possess actual life and it is very difficult to believe that it is—as we are told it is—a novel, and not a record of a very interesting if harrowing case-history.

There are, of course, many ways in which Edmund's particular case could have worked itself out, but the one Mr. Beachcroft has chosen is so complete as to seem to be "what really did happen", and so to be inevitable. His Edmund is a living, friendly person, someone we like from the first and whose accident fills us with dismay and whose recovery affects us as would the recovery of someone we hoped would come through all right. That he is a much nicer person afterwards we can perhaps congratulate ourselves on anticipating; the germ of decency being apparent from the very first. Anyone who reads *The Man Who Started Clean* (this title is not worthy of the substance of the book), will wait as anxiously for Mr. Beachcroft's next novel as those who read *A Young Man in a Hurry* waited for this.

M. D. COLE

COMING FROM THE FAIR. By NORAH HOULT. Heinemann.  
7s. 6d.

CHARLIE O'NEILL is a bad lad and his primrose path, giddily traced, is the chief motif of Norah Houlst's new book, sequel to *Holy Ireland*. *Coming from the Fair* is as well written as Miss Houlst's former books but it lacks their brilliant construction. She has carved her chess pieces

adroitly, started the game with a flourish, then suddenly, it seems, grown tired and cried stalemate, leaving the pawns in charge.

For although Charlie dies with pointless fervour, one feels some of the others should have a chance to resolve or be resolved ; many mothers of ten "bury six" yet it seems a little eccentric that of a family of four and one son-in-law, Julia O'Neill should lose all in more or less mournful circumstances.

The bar scenes are magnificent, however, and Dublin life riots through twenty hectic years, to end, typically, we suppose, with another pub and another funeral. But Miss Hoult writes too well to be congratulated on writing haphazardly.

S. H. DOBSON

THE SEVEN WHO FLED. By FREDERIC PROKOSCH. Chatto and Windus. 8s. 6d.

NO SIMILE COULD describe the felicity and brilliance of Prokosch's work yet to say that it resembled modern music is to catch something of its balanced dissonance.

These seven who fled are matchboard puppets dangling across prose of such tumultuous colour that their personalities are completely obliterated. The desert, the intense winter cold, the torrid heat of sand-racked valleys, the great gorges of the Yangtze, take on shape and size till human destiny spills out, a thin thread, to lose itself under thick snow or fallen leaves.

Yet pattern of life remains :

Serafimov, "a man without a home," looks for a place where he can lose his identity; Goupillière, the mutilated Belgian, Layeville, the Englishman who had "done" everything, and those others, Austrian, German, Spanish, French, lose their identity in looking for a place.

Reality plays shuttlecock with their pasts, forging a present stranger far than any fiction. For they appear to become part of their own experience, symbol of passage.

Yet description makes crescendo of every chord of action. Each page shows rare and delightful sentences, each paragraph contains some potent phrase, each sentence is rhythmic and balanced.

*The Seven Who Fled* is a book for connoisseurs as well as for the casual reader.

S. H. DOBSON

THIS WAS THEIR YOUTH. By RALPH FOX. Secker and Warburg. 7s. 6d.

FOX'S IS A misleading book. Its hero is a community, a small Yorkshire industrial town, and though at first sight it seems a work of very small scale, I had the feeling all the time that it was planned

as the basis of a series, perhaps a trilogy, which Fox was never able to complete. The scope of the characterization is very wide, and shaped with a Dickensian mixture of humour and grimness, with broad social themes lying very deep and hardly stirring in this book. There is no doubt that Fox was a novelist with an objective eye and a humane sensibility rare in our time. There is nothing freakish, idiosyncratic, in his writing: it has no affectation either on the "academic" or the "tough" side, but is altogether pleasant, clear, and alive. For all that, the book is small, neat, and tantalizing—tantalizing because it is chiefly a promise, which cannot now be fulfilled.

RANDALL SWINGLER

THE WILD GOOSE CHASE. By REX WARNER. Boriswood. 8s. 6d.

THE GOOD FABLE is a rare form of literature, because to be effective it must be fool-proof. In the first place it necessitates, I think, that the reader must start from the world in which he sits and reads. Gulliver set out on his voyage from England, Alice went through the looking-glass from her Victorian drawing room, Christian left his lower-middle-class home in Bedford. The influence of the fable is then the gradual realization that the discovered world, in which at first sight overt characteristics seemed to be the exact opposite of corresponding phenomena of actual life, yet works by the same laws as the world we live in. And so, seeing this visited world as a single objective entity in which we are not implicated, we are forced to deduce without resistance or prejudice the general laws by which it is activated. And the primary resistance to understanding by social conditioning is evaded.

Rex Warner has, I think, jeopardized the success of his fable on the very first page, because the town from which George and his two brothers set out to chase the Wild Goose is not Plymouth or London, but already a legendary locality. In consequence George himself becomes a person of a different order to our own, and there is no reason why his impressions and actions in the country "across the frontier" should hold good for any state of existence but his original legendary one. This is one of the bad effects of a Kafka influence, for in Kafka's mind there is no transition from actual to fanciful: the actual is the fanciful and the reader "crosses the frontier" by opening the book.

It must not be thought from this that *The Wild Goose Chase* is a book which can be judged by logical categories, or by anything but very high standards. It is without doubt a tremendous and, in many ways, splendid undertaking. It must be judged as a poem is judged, by the completeness and consistence of the interaction of its imagery. Rex Warner fails to be consistent and objective at the point where

George ceases to be the stranger and becomes involved socially with the peasants of the new country he has entered. Thenceforward the narrative becomes straightforward epical realism and is the best part of the book. The appearances of the Wild Goose are beautifully contrived. But I have one other fault to find—that the writing is too often mannered and “literary” (the voice of Kafka haunts awkwardly the opening pages)—before I re-affirm that it contains many fine and moving passages, and the whole is a work ten times as large-minded, generous, and imaginative as anything of the kind produced in England for years.

RANDALL SWINGLER

THE WOODEN SPOON. By WYN GRIFFITH. Dent. 7s. 6d.

ONE CANNOT SAY “another *Ordinary Life*”. The author is no Čapek. But “not by eastern windows only” and it is, it seems, inevitable, that as psycho-analysis becomes more widespread in its effect, a work will spring up that is not directly influenced. Mr. Griffith’s novel would have been better had he been. It is not that his tale, which is unremarkable, could have been told as well straightforwardly. A young man loves a young woman. The love is wrecked by another whom, years later, he marries. That happens to many; to all in a sense, who love young, the one they marry is another. But Wyn Griffith, missing that point, misses two—he gives neither the vigour of melo-tragedy nor the (no less tempestuous) truth of mental drama. He seems trying to break through a hedge of the nature of whose brambles he has no idea. Indeed, *The Wooden Spoon* would not merit attention, even though it is sufficiently sincere on its own ground to show the uselessness of dancing Tom Tiddler any more on it. But, because it genuinely sets out to go deeper than usual, one feels constrained to tell the author that his method won’t be natural, that is, functioning, till he knows himself.

EDWARD FARRER

I LIVE UNDER A BLACK SUN. By EDITH SITWELL. Gollancz. 7s. 6d.

PLENTY OF PEOPLE will have a preconceived notion of what a novel by Edith Sitwell would be like. On the first, as indeed occasionally on subsequent, pages she herself seems to play into their hands. “Through the forest of white damson trees with the constellations of sharp and of soft flower-petals and of dew falling upon their hair and brushing their lips, . . . two young people were walking hand in hand.” But it does not take long to discover that Miss Sitwell has done much that few

will have anticipated. Most striking is the emotional force of the book, which surprises by its so-feminine masculine strength. Her feeling for atmosphere and her response to the mind's tides can by now be taken for granted; new here is her handling of both on alternating planes of symbolism and actuality so grim as to be tear-shot satire. *I Live Under a Black Sun* may not be a meticulous book. In the grip of imagination, the author has not bothered to be meticulous, in the sense of writing a "period" novel. She has not, perhaps, written a novel at all. Instead, that rare thing, a book. The story is inspired by her knowledge and love of Swift, who is now in this age, now in that, often with minor details all wrong, but with most things that matter, all right. There is both the squalor and the brocaded splendour of the eighteenth century in it, and though it is not a book "of" to-day, it is a book one remembers to-morrow.

C. ROW

THE HAPPY PHILISTINE. By SILVIA DOBSON. Duckworth. 7s. 6d.

SOME WORDS, whilst silly, remain inevitable, "heroine" is no kind of word for a person sufficiently real to be any one of us, and the young girl in this book is real—real enough to grow and become a woman. Her name is Deidre Carnival—which perhaps is not a good start—and her fight for freedom takes the form of *not* wishing to be an artist—and that is a good start, or at least encouraging. She wishes only to be ordinary, and ordinarily happy. The book is a full-length portrait, at times a little rough, at times over-lit. But the author makes her live, sketches in other characters well and has a wit which is the quicker for being quiet. Further, her driving force is sufficient to make what might be a puzzling technique extremely effective in giving us the puzzled sensitive zestful personality of her—I shall have to say it—heroine.

W. S. DEAN

NEPTUNE BEACH. By DANIEL FUCHS. Constable. 7s. 6d.

IF YOU MENTION London to a foreigner he immediately answers "O yes, there's always a fog there if it's not raining, isn't there?" And in Chicago, everybody knows, you can't venture out into the street without your bullet-proof waistcoat. Now, if the author of *Neptune Beach* is to be believed, the convention of violence has spread even to this Southend-on-Sea suburb of New York which he has chosen as the site for his new novel. At first the habit shows itself in relatively painless, merely rather destructive, ways such as the use of clocks as missiles, and of bottom-pinching as a flirtatious prelude. Later the violence increases. A pathetic

fat brothel-owner is beaten up by some gangsters who are trying to make a corner in the business, a weak gambler is beaten up by his brothers-in-law, a snackbar proprietor is beaten up and killed in a public lavatory by the gambler and his own dishwasher. In spite of all this, and in spite of the rather unexalted spiritual values of his characters, Mr. Fuchs has written a book which cannot be dismissed as being merely sensational. The people appear real, though they lie right outside the insular unexciting experience of an Englishman, their actions seem at least plausible if not probable, and there is something about their unfortunate lives, starved of satisfactory outlets for their excess vitality, and perverted by the contradictory ethics of their society, which seems vaguely admirable. They have vigour even though it is consistently misdirected, and this is at times a fortunate antidote to the continual apathy of our own surroundings.

JOHN MADGE

## FILM

GARBO AND THE NIGHT WATCHMEN. Assembled and edited by ALISTAIR COOKE. Jonathan Cape. 7s. 6d.

ALISTAIR COOKE, who has gathered this anthology of film criticism, has written elsewhere in an essay on *The Film Critic in History* "that there's no sense in arranging what the perfect critic shall be and then looking around for a human being to fit. The fact is, there have been, and will go on being, many sorts of good critic". Here he presents nine of them, American and English,—Robert Herring, Don Herold, John Marks, Meyer Levin, Robert Forsythe, Graham Greene, Otis Ferguson, Cecelia Ager, and himself—in a number of published pieces about particular movies of the last ten years, ranging in length from a note to an essay. If they write about the same film it is by editorial accident, except in the final section of the book where Alistair Cooke rounds up his night watchmen and "sets them to work on a single comet"—Chaplin in *Modern Times* about whom at least "all critics expect to write nothing less than the truth".

What can one expect of a good film critic? That he should write well and be worth reading, in the sense that he tells us what he liked and why? Agreed. That he should give every film a fair break? Well—see Alistair Cooke on the film that gave him influenza. That he should tell the truth? Who is to judge this? Is it even a possible demand until we know what we expect to get from the movies, besides movement? Cecelia Ager writing avowedly on only one aspect of the films she sees—the women in it—knows what she is after and so do her readers. And so with Robert Forsythe writing in *New Masses*, for

clearly defined audience. Every critic, like Forsythe, must write for a specific audience which either exists already or which he wishes to create—an audience which sees movies the way he does. Without such an audience the critic must become in his time, as Alistair Cooke puts it, “tipster, narrator, propagandist, father-confessor, and when he is left alone—a fan.”

The critic (and the particular critic here represented) is here revealed in all these guises. You may endorse or challenge his tips and his propaganda, feel you could dispense with his narration if thereby you could enjoy his confidence more amply. For being fans you will thank him. Movies—even the bad ones—are important to all of these writers. And whether you agree with them or not—what they have to say is always illuminating and provocative. Here is film criticism to-day at its best.

WILLIAM FARR

MOVIES FOR THE MILLIONS. By GILBERT SELDES. Illustrated. Batsford. 7s. 6d.

SILVER SCREEN SPELLS “standardization”. So it’s good for Europeans to read American critics and realize that however “highbrow” they may be, to them Hollywood is the climax, not the curiosity, of cinema. You will find in this book one still but no other mention of Pabst; none of Ivens, Dovjenko, Duvivier, Asta Nielsen, Guitry, Dieterle (though he works in America). It’s all very amusing, until Seldes, as “American Critic to the English Public”, observes that “the chief competitor in the American field of the straight commercial movie is England. . . . The names of Korda and René Clair instantly come to mind and then one hesitates—and the foreign picture is lost.” Naturally. It would be if we, in Europe, took Fred Niblo and Sam Taylor as the best coming here from California.

Seldes is a man of much knowledge but less ideas. He is consistently sound. I grow tired of the safe opinion, so true, and so sober water-tight. I’d greet a man who makes the glorious mistake. Like Lamb’s Chinese man—why won’t a critic burn down his house and discover, or leave someone else to, that the result is roast pig? The only moment in which I struck blood in this book was that in which the author stressed the sociological and psychological of “the time of day at which you go to the movies”. I found this illuminating, but by then there were only twelve more pages to go, and having gone them, I consider by far the best parts of the book are the preface by Chaplin (on censorship), and the selection of stills, from the last century on, which in particular make this reference-volume a marvel of cheap whilst distinguished book-production.

ROBERT HERRING



## ESPRIT DE CORPS (OFFICERS' TRAINING)

A MODERN TOM BROWN'S SCHOOLDAYS. By MICHAEL SCOTT. Harrap. 7s. 6d.

I CHOSE TEACHING. By RONALD GURNER. Dent. 10s. 6d.

LETTERS FROM ICELAND. By W. H. AUDEN and LOUIS MACNEICE. Faber and Faber. 12s. 6d.

CAD THAT I am, I don't care if it is or isn't cricket to say that Michael Scott's spiffing yarn makes an awfully decent contrast with Osbert Sitwell's description of the paters' match on page 86 of this issue. Mr. Sitwell didn't go to Rugby and that of course makes a difference to any man. Mr. Scott did. The same goes for him—it made a difference. Also, he was one of the four directors of the Public School Empire Tour to New Zealand. So listen here, you men, this is how he writes on the Old Rugbeian match.

"It was a well-fed crowd that trooped during the afternoon back on to Ringside, to witness the last phase of the O.R. match. 'The school was batting, of course. Would they win? Would they lose? Five wickets down in the second innings; Flashman still in with 127, playing faultlessly. . . Tom was enjoying his first experience to the full. Rugby had displayed herself in all her knowledge and beauty and his heart beat strong with pride as he felt at one with her as one of her sons.'"

Earlier, "with these thoughts and many others, little intimate thoughts on this and that, such as schoolboys have," Tom has, in his author's words, "lived through the week before Speech Day" and this is how he greets his father.

"'You're enjoying yourself like the devil, I suppose,' said the Major.

"'Oh, rather. I have a ripping time, and the chaps are all very decent on the whole.'"

If our non-English readers find it a sign of sickness that people should talk like that, I must explain of Tom's family that

"family pride became an attribute with which they were born, never questioned, never wondered at, and never thought of despising. For centuries they had upheld the tradition of fine English gentlemen. They had joined the Crusades, fought at Crécy and Agincourt, attacked the Armada and had sailed with Drake to the Spanish Main in quest of land and fortune."

Tough guys. But indubitably O.T.C., for Mr. Scott, who has written a book from the outlook of a rather backward Bourbon boy, "thoroughly believes in our public schools, which I am convinced are good places." If anyone needs further recommendation for a bit of good clean fun, let me quote from the back of the cover, which is slashed with the colours of the old school tie (and what a tie the old school can be). Dr. David there declares that this book "shows the Rugby spirit at

its best. The shadier side is not ignored, but given its right proportion. The Masters, too, have their rightful place in the scene ”.

I don't know if Mr. Gurner would entirely approve of the word “*too*” in that last sentence. He might think it connected the masters with the shadier side. But he needn't worry. Like Tom Brown and his author, he is almost too good to be true. “I have worked as a boy until midnight myself and I do not repent of the fact that I have asked other boys to do so.” Well, that's sticking to one's guns, even if it does make one inquire for the cause of stickiness. But the answer's not far to seek. “Old Gurner,” as we might as well call him right now, was assistant master at Clifton, Haileybury, and Marlborough before reaching his present post. When you consider what lifelong effect four years' sojourn at even one of those places can, and almost invariably does have, on boys, with a greater variety of interests, you can imagine the cramping effect on pickled Gurner, as I hope someone called him. He didn't like Clifton—and I don't wonder ; it seemed unduly precocious. Before the war, they were reading T. S. Eliot there—whereas, when we were, as dart-players say, “suffering,” there were doubts, six years after the Armistice, as to whether Flecker's *Hassan* could be included in the school library without harm to the boys. Times have changed since then, and as not for the better, it is all the more dangerous that old Gurner doesn't seem to have changed at all. It's almost Will Hay gone a step too far. I can only hope to be believed by quoting. Here is the author on Hygiene : “a thoroughly hearty English system, which raised no problems simply because it never occurred to anybody that under it a decent well-conditioned boy could do anything but thrive. Thrive he did or woe betide him.” Day-boys ; “the unbroken companionship with his parents is of value” (O, master substitute !). Exams ; “give school work purpose and direction” and “enable a boy to qualify for admission to the professional or economic worlds” and “promote discipline”. Sex ; “however turbulent be Nature and however insistent in her demands, the fundamental sanity and decency of an English boy prevails.” Character ; “as usually understood, implies the possession of a code of honour, of personal decency, of a conception of the sacredness of duty, of respect for truth, of loyalty, of courage, and, to most thinking men and women at least, of bodily chastity during the formative years.” Spiritual ditto can, of course, look after itself ? We hope so, for though old Gurner isn't patently retrogressive, his pages are full of allusions to sex and the O.T.C., whence the inferences are obvious. He suffers, of course, from the desire to show that the boys of his own school are just as much “gentlemen” as those from others. But he needn't have bothered. Those excellent sixth-formers, Auden and MacNeice, do it for him. In their book is the final answer to that snob-sadism known as the public school system. It is some time since each of these writers left school, let alone

the university, yet only when free of their home-town and financed by their publishers dare they be really public school. For surely few young men in their late twenties have been as belatedly young as this since Mr. Coward discarded fig-leaves in favour of the Union Jack? *Letters from Iceland*, we are given to understand, was commissioned; Mr. W. H. A. frequently mentions contracts, and observes, disarmingly, "I've been here a month and haven't the slightest idea how to begin to write the book." The idea he finally worked on was a series of informal letters, and inept imitations of Byron, both presupposing a greater interest in the private lives of the authors than the average adult reader may be presumed to grant. Chapters for "Tourists" are pamphlet pieces and other "necessary" description is introduced thus; Christopher (Isherwood) inquires of Reykjavik, "is there any attempt to make the visitor feel he is arriving at a capital?" The answer is not, why should there be, but—"Not much. There is nothing by the pier but warehouses and piles of agricultural implements under tarpaulin. Most of the town is built of corrugated iron." *Henry VIII was a king who married many wives and went Protestant so as to get well*. No mention here of the hues in which the iron is painted, of the effects of Northern light on it or of the fact that said iron was used largely because of its lightness as freight. No need for there to be; the authors would then have been "guilty" of making a guide. Psychologically, they are so "guilty" that they dare only make a scouts' diary, a couple of super-sophisticated simple scouts, in best Lawrence-Dora Russell manner, damned if they're going to be romantic about a civilization to which they don't belong. I find this book produces something of the impression of a spinster bemoaning that you can't get decent tea in Dax. "Decent" is a deliberately operative word, the O.T.C. is their fall-back on fright-consolation and the culmination is a Rupert Brooke *à la démodé*, called *Last Will and Testament*. The publishers state that "there may be other books about Iceland". I can only be grateful that this is the only one written from the public school viewpoint by two who have had every encouragement to be healed of it.

TREVOR JAMES

## JUVENILE LITERATURE

ONE OF THE most difficult tasks that confronts a reviewer is to classify juvenile literature to "ages".

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good old dictum that the child-mind needs something of everything. Classification of an accurate kind is almost impossible. One can but roughly divide the present batch of books into nursery (to which, of course, the adult is closely related), schoolroom, and junior prep. school, and hope for the best.

This collection is rather one-coloured in tone. There are high lights in the nursery-adult section : and these lights are very high indeed. *Ylla's Dog Fancies* (Methuen, 2s. 6d.), is a heavenly book. Ylla has taken sixteen really lovely photographs of dogs and puppies, photographs which are not only art but are also guaranteed to produce screams of ecstasy from those who see them. To these she adds a few words of letterpress : almost unnecessarily, for the animals "speak for themselves". The nursery won't keep this book long : schoolroom and parents will fight for it. A battle or two will also rage over *Mittens* by Clara T. Newberry (Hamish Hamilton, 3s. 6d.), an entrancing kitten story with almost irresistible pictures. A delightful little story about three small pigs is *Squishy Apples* written and charmingly illustrated by Cicely Englefield (Murray, 2s.). There is much humour both in the words and in the black and white drawings. Another humorous animal-story is *Mary Plain on Holiday*, by Gwynedd Rae (Cobden Sanderson, 3s. 6d.), the adventures of a bear cub who lives in the home of a man who, for reasons not explained, is called the Owl Man. There are other "Mary" books : those who do not know this unusual bear should make her acquaintance now.

Small children whose tastes are more domesticated will enjoy Jane Struthers' adaptation in verse of a Swedish children's book, *When Grandmamma was Small* (Methuen, 3s. 6d.), with seven gay full page colour illustrations by Beta Broman of Grandmamma very busy over her dolls. This is a beautifully produced book and, though slight, it is well worth 3s. 6d. *The Gunniwolf* (Harrap, 5s.) will find a more specialized public. This is a collection made by Wilhemina Harper of short fairy stories by various authors, artistically illustrated in colour and crayon by Kate Seredy. This book will be good for reading aloud to the quieter type of small child. These same children will enjoy a new translation of *Tales from Grimm* (Faber, 5s.), by Wanda Gag, who has also amusingly illustrated her stories in black and white. This collection includes some little known tales, and Wanda Gag's sense of humour, demonstrated in her *Millions of Cats* book, breaks cheerfully into these and more familiar tales.

For more adventurously-minded members of the younger schoolroom there is *The Jumping Lions of Borneo*, by J. W. Dunne (Faber, 4s. 6d.). The author of *An Experiment with Time* shows that he is completely at home with the child-mind. This story of the jumping lions who, when captured, sprang out of their cages, caused terrific confusion in an English Zoo was told to children of five : but it will

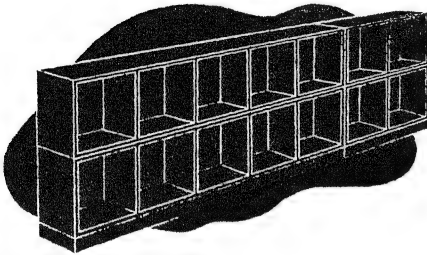
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also entertain older animal-loving children with a sense of humour. It is a rollicking story, highly improbable but great fun. *Children of Sunny Syria*, by Myrta H. Dodds, illustrated by Margaret Ayer (Harrap, 5s.), describes the life of five small Syrians, first on their father's silk-worm farm, then as Wanderers. It is suitable for the more serious young who like reading about the lives of children in other countries. For older children with similar tastes there is *The Good Master*, written and finely illustrated by Kate Seredy (Harrap, 5s.), the story of a Hungarian boy and girl on a farm, on horseback over the plains, at a fair and so on.

Those who liked *Claudius the Bee* will presumably like John Leeming's sequel, *Thanks to Claudius* (Harrap, 5s.), while those who didn't will dislike this second satire with equal vehemence. Let no one believe that these books bear any resemblance to the actual life of a bee: they don't. In contrast, *Carcajou*, by Rutherford Montgomery (Arrow-smith, 5s.), is an admirable story of the savage skunk bear or wolverine of North America and his feud to the death with a Red Indian and his tame grizzly bear. It is an unusually good tale, dramatically told. *Joe and Pinto*, by Frances Lloyd-Owen (Harrap, 5s.), is a more conventional story of a Red Indian boy, a horse, a cattle ranch, a forest fire, and other familiar ingredients. But there can never be too many of this kind of book, and this is quite good in its class. *Wardens of the Wild*, by T. C. Bridges (Harrap, 5s.), is an informative book describing the big animal and bird-sanctuaries all over the world. It includes many big-game adventure anecdotes and is illustrated with photographs.

The tastes of the young schoolgirl are the despair of her parents. In return for heavy school fees these poor elders are given a general impression of the "awfulness" of everything and everybody combined with an insatiable appetite for sweets and sensation. Mrs. T. F. W. Hickey apparently knows this only too well, and caters admirably for all schoolgirl requirements in the way of slang, thrills, and abuse of fellow-creatures in *The Hand*, the story of a girl, a boy, and a mystery. It seems deplorable that children should be encouraged to rummage freely in the rooms and desks of other people: and it seems a pity that *The Hand* is in so many ways reminiscent of Mrs. Hickey's last book, *Bulldog Sheila*; but the young probably won't mind either of these failings.

LORNA LEWIS

HOW THEY SENT THE NEWS. By J. WALKER McSPADDEN.  
Illustrated. Harrap. 7s. 6d.

THE HISTORY OF messages is here told in a series of stories, some true, some fictional. The (apparently American) author starts with cave-drawings, and then tells of Gideon and his torches, the drums of

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Africa, the smoke-blanket of the Red Indians, lighthouses, lightships, heliograph and semaphores. I do not see why carrier-pigeons, posts and press-services were not thought worthy of mention. But "message" and "news" are wide words, and the author has included much, a portion of the book being devoted to telegraphy, wireless, the telephone, and television, and the work of Morse, Marconi, and Bell. It is a sensible, straightforward book, keeping facts well in the foreground without seeming a lesson. There are sixteen good illustrations. But I feel it a pity that the price will prevent a good many boys, who would be thrilled, from becoming possessors.

C. ROW

NEPTUNE'S GARDEN. By L. R. BRIGHTWELL. Pitman. 3s. 6d.

WE DON'T LIKE the sea prettified; if children are to know what *Neptune's Garden* is (it sounds like a Derry and Toms Christmas side-show) they might as well be instructed in Oceanic Undergrowth. All the same, we ourselves never had anyone or any book to inform us that the sea was a garden. It was quite evident. But no one but ourselves seemed to see it that way. And we didn't know we did, because we hadn't the words. This book makes all that clear. It provides a literary under-sea window, letting children in on the life of seaweeds, sea-squirts, anemones, corals, and sponges. Actual information as to the part played by sea-weeds in such different spheres as diet and against coastal erosion abounds, as they say of flora, and lucid illustrations show how these grow at different depths, charm with drawings of "the things that grow on sea-weed" (sea-fir and moss animals), and instruct with scale-pictures of the world's largest sea-weed compared to the *Queen Mary* (which must surprise even that ship) or animals that live only on sea-weed. Despite its use of the word "bookery", we recommend this both to the aspiringly intelligent parent and to the boy showing, or about to show, more interest in his bucket than in his spade.

W. S. DEAN

JOHN : FILM STAR. By EVELYN EATON. Nelson. 5s.

PLAY UP ! PLAY up ! play this game ! Who wants to be the engine driver of an electric train, but every girl and boy has his-her dream eye fixed on being Gary Cooper. John went to Paris and plotted to substitute in a film rôle for a French juvenile friend. An unfriendly cameraman nearly "exposed" the imposture. But John makes good, and Evelyn Eaton does better.

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TURNING NIGHT INTO DAY. The Story of Lighting. By M. ILIN. Illustrated by N. Lapshin. Routledge. 3s. 6d.

CHILDREN, TO WHOM reading is a feat newly mastered, are most likely to feel friendly to those books which read like talks. This one is a model of the kind. In no sense written-down, it is the interesting story of lighting told by an adult who's learnt enough to pause now and again, while his points are understood. From bonfire and torch to lantern, candle and link-boy, the story is traced. Then comes the invention of gas and of electricity, and the discovery of luceferin. Interspersed are drawings fancy-full without being fatuous, and signposts to history (the first street-lit town was Paris, Louis XIV; the first consignment of electric bulbs to Europe was only 1800)—facts for growing minds to chew on. With its gay and intelligent cover to attract, the book should be well-thumbed by anyone between eight and twelve.

A. WILLS

THIS YEAR : NEXT YEAR. By WALTER DE LA MARE and HAROLD JONES. Faber. 7s. 6d.

MR. DE LA MARE writes to children in his happiest vein. I say "to" rather than "for", because one or two of these poems belong more to sublimated childhood than to children, and I feel that once or twice he has unconsciously permitted himself to be a little careless, mistaking ease for simplicity. Nevertheless,

"The North Wind sighed :  
And in a trice  
What was water  
Now is ice,"

surely is this poet at his best, and *The Little Shop*, despite a reference to "Little Old Nowhere Street", is an enchanting jumble of the figures of history with the contents of a sweet-and-toy shop which they are imagined to visit. The book takes one through the year, with poems of nostalgic evocation on ducks, sleep, holidays, the garden, punch and judy, harvest, fireworks, pantomime—the items that would be recalled from an idealized childhood, more than those drawn from actual children imaginatively understood. The slightly old-fashioned air of the volume is admirably borne out by the many beautiful coloured illustrations of Harold Jones, which have some kinship with the plates of the juvenile drama.

H. K. FISHER

BROTHER ESKIMO. By ALAN SULLIVAN. Pitman. 3s. 6d.

N'GAGA. By C. BARRINGTON GYFORD. Pitman. 3s. 6d.

CORNISH ADVENTURE. By DEREK McCULLOCH. Pitman. 3s. 6d.

THIS WAY TO THE CASTLE ! By RUTH COBB. Pitman. 3s. 6d.

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Paul Rotha "Mr. Herring makes the old plea for special films for special audiences Mr Dallas Bower's attack on documentary would be fine if his facts were right."*Manchester Guardian* "Mr. Dallas Bower writes amusingly and cogently. Mr Herring gives good reasons for believing that the new phase of specialization has well begun."ROBERT HERRING  
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colours of fiction joined the stick as methods of gaining their acceptance. Of these books Alan Sullivan's *Brother Eskimo* most nearly escapes the Victorian tradition. He manages to convey a great deal of interesting information about the arctic and Eskimo life without unduly sacrificing excitement or continuity. The adventures of the two Eskimo boys have reality and significance and, even more surprising, the younger is an artist, who is yet a "decent fellow". His character is sympathetically and convincingly drawn as is that of his elder, hunter, brother. Indeed the whole book is informed with humanity and naturalness which is not at all priggish. Suitable age ten years plus. In *N'Gaga* Mr. Gyford shows that even a gorilla may have a heart of gold. The African setting of this simple, straightforward story is admirable. The gorillas are never over-human, their thoughts and conversation are well within their range and the book as a whole is distinguished by not attempting too much, even though it is with a slight start that one realizes that Kitumbo, the gorilla hero, does not wear the old school tie. A thoroughly good example of the animal story. Suitable age ten years plus. *Cornish Adventure* is public school throughout. Cornish fishermen and farmers react as correctly as Jones mi., to the slightly mechanical twists of this modern smuggling story. "A rattling good yarn" for the not over-critical. Suitable age, twelve plus. Miss Cobb has had a good idea, to tell something of the history of the common objects of the countryside, castles, churches, roads, etc. Her method, however, is diffuse and condescending, hardly calculated to win the interest of most children, though the historically minded would undoubtedly obtain many useful sidelights. Miss Cobb illustrates her own book with quite nice sketches. These books form part of a new series issued by Pitman, they are well produced and printed, stoutly bound and easy to handle, and are without that unpleasant smell which is so often exhaled by books of this type, but on the whole the illustrations could be improved.

D. STURGE MOORE

BOOKSHOPS AS WELL as publishers set out to help harassed elders in choosing sane books for children. Abbatts, of Wimpole Street, issue graded lists of books recommended. These are chosen from the catalogues of various publishers, and among the volumes stocked are *Tennis Shoes* (5s.), Noel Streatfield's successor to last year's *Ballet Shoes*; an American tale, *When the Wind Blew* (6s. 6d.); a story, *The Far-Distant Oxus* (7s. 6d.), written by two schoolgirls of fifteen and sixteen respectively; and Samibel's *Les Blagueurs de Bagdad* (3s. 6d.), mainly and marvellously illustrated.

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## H. D.

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*(John O'London's Weekly)*

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"THE ATMOSPHERE OF THE TIME AND PLACE ARE RATHER SUGGESTED THAN DESCRIBED, WITH A NUMBER OF SUBTLE TOUCHES"

*(Times Literary Supplement)*

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## COMPLIMENTS OF THE SEASON

COMPARING CHRISTMAS CARDS, one is more apt to be appalled by the bad than struck by the good; as with much doing with Christmas, quantity tends to be thought more impressive than quality, and the only surprise remains the old one—that with a whole year in which to plan, publishers and artists continue to produce so much that is trite, trivial, and tasteless.

We open with this carping note because we do not wish to end on it, and it is the purpose of this page to save readers that reaction which is inevitable after hours of ploughing through albums, trays, and boxes. We have made our discoveries, and though they may be only our own taste, we are glad to hand them on—with the compliments of the season. Since people will wish to know where to get them, we accordingly list them by firms.

FORTNUM AND MASON.—The successor to last year's old hand-coloured map cards is the nineteenth-century fashion-plate (Rimini of Oxford). These cost 3s. 6d., but are genuine (ours is 1820), and can be framed. Among other old prints that we picked out were the *Surry (sic) Theatre*, published 16th February, 1828; "Regent Street from the Circus Piccadilly, previous to taking down Carlton Palace," and "New London Bridge, with the Lord Mayor's Procession Passing under the Unfinish'd Arches, 9th November, 1827". All these are drawn by Thos. Shepherd. To-day's interest in the industrial aspect of the age is shown in such subjects as "The Double Lock and East Entrance to the Islington Tunnel, Regent's Canal", and by early railway plates, whilst of the eighteenth century we were particularly pleased by "St. George's Hospital at Hyde Park Corner". The card is not there any more, for we bought it. All these varying from one and ninepence to half a crown. Of modern cards, there is a striking selection from America, where the rule seems to be that if you're going to be uninhibited and send cards, you might as well lose all restraint. Cellophane, foil, silver and gilt paper are typical of this batch. English ones include a silhouette by Lotte Reiniger; a pleasant lino-cut of *Kelp Gatherers*, by John Mavrogadato; and one of the few references to Santa Claus in this year's output—the old gentleman descending via parachute, leaving the customary reindeer looking distinctly disgruntled in the clouds. There was also a new style card which opened out like a toy-theatre.

WARD GALLERY, Baker Street, have a field card which wins our sympathy—three dejected huntsmen are returning, amidst jeers from rabbit and scarecrow, while the fox says, "Better luck next time." The fox has nailed a horseshoe over its lair. The Arctic is touched on

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at Ward's by *Christmas with the Sea Lions* and *The Polar Bears' Christmas*. Candles are stuck on the icebergs, and the presents are fish, tied with ribbon. This gallery supplies reproductions of fashion-plates, suitably captioned; thus *Child's Walking Dress*, 1830 has *Where did you come from, Baby dear?* Modern cards are illustrated with frameable water-colour sea-pieces by Rowland Hilder, designs by Clifford Webb, and an agreeable wood-engraving by Rachel Reckitt of a race-meeting. This may seem as inappropriate as the fair scene of another firm, but it must be remembered that people who dislike winter wish to be reminded of other seasons. All the same, we are surprised there are no football cards—and an opportunity is missed over darts. Tirolese (S.F. 3, etc.) have replaced Dutch as favourite figures; we notice also that, among animals, the horse is prominent, a frisky white colt (B. 1), and three Chiroco-ish steeds in pink, black, and yellow on a calendar being the most appealing. Photo-montage is included (B.H. 1, onwards), and when Ward's do introduce aeroplanes, unlike Heffer and the rest, they also combine them with doves. Enough will have been said to show that Ward's is an unusually varied selection. In fact, they beat not only other publishers hands down, but surpass their own record as well. There remain further examples—of cards in which the letterpress matters. One range quotes from Leigh Hunt, etc.; another has carols, Anglo-Norman and sixteenth century. None of the Ward cards offend and all are cheap at their various prices.

SAMSON PRESS, Oxford.—The gayest quotation we have found is on a series called *Christmas Through the Ages*, from this press. It is No. 6, the seventeenth century, and we give it in full. Congreve writes to Edward Porter, 1st January, 1700, *The hautboys who played to us last night had their breath froze in their instruments till it dropt off the ends of 'em in icicles by god this is true.*

W. HEFFER, as befits their Cambridge situation, specialize in country scenes, of which C. 6395, 6412, 6443 are good examples. Dignified is the description for this house, though successful exceptions are some navy-blue reindeer marching on snow (C. 6446) and a child's lucky elephant (C. 6401). The "Cantabrigia" series maintains its standard, without, we think, raising it. Indeed, there seemed a number of familiar friends from last year. We hope this means success, but it also means fewer novelties.

The MEDICI Gallery in the main draws the same criticism. It continues to reproduce *The Little Street in Delft* (da Vinci's *Madonna of the Rocks*, OB 12/9155, is noteworthy in this series), and its reproductions of seventeenth century maps (LO 4/1) are not so good as Fortnum's actual ones. Rowland Hilder must be having a good year, for here are some more of his water-colours (ZA 9/17), and we find also another Lotte Reiniger, light blue background setting off the black silhouette in a gold frame (AR 12/1).

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The BRITISH MUSEUM are even less adventurous than either Heffer or the Medici, for they add only one new card, Ludwig Richter's "Christmas Eve" (1874) - not, we think, a patch on any of last year's.

The GOLDEN COCKEREL PRESS produce sixteen exquisite wood-engraving cards; the artists are Robert Gibbings, Agnes Miller Parker, Eric Ravilious, John Nash. Texts are drawn from Robert Bridges, Llewellyn Powys, etc. Subjects are mainly bird or animal, but include train on viaduct (Ravilious, No. 9), Village (Agnes Miller Parker, No. 3), and satisfactory still-life (Nash, No. 6). Gibbings (No. 12) has done a particularly delightful Hotchiwitschi (which the text informs us is gypsy for hedgehog), and also a frog in a funny hat (No. 13). Agnes Miller Parker attracts with a meeting of cats (No. 5). None of these cards costs more than 6d. and most are 4d.

RAPHAEL TUCK takes us back into what he reminds us each year we were premature in regarding as the past. Here it still is, a world of olde-worlde waits, what-the-Dickens coaches, gardens (assuredly "quaint" since in them all the year's flowers bloom simultaneously). We emerge with a dazed impression that this world is inhabited solely by crinoline ladies in Spanish galleons, robins that live outside snowed-up cottages, and huntsmen chasing black cats out of Curiosity Shoppes, in which Shakespeare smokes Dr. Johnson's pipes with Dick Turpin. Not exactly our cup of tea, but as most of us know those who'd quite seriously like them, they serve their purpose by being better to give than to receive.

## CORRESPONDENCE

SIR,—MAY ANOTHER foundation-reader of your journal add his tribute of pleasure and appreciation. An exile, comparatively speaking, in an intellectual desert, I find it a quarterly balm and inspiration. Apropos your most original editorials, please continue the good work. I find that they reveal a personality that provides just that fine degree of pensive humanity designed to foster in the mind of an attentive reader the growth of sympathy. And (apologies to Miss Thompson !!), do not fail to let me know when my subscription is due for renewal.

Most sincerely yours,

ERIC A. McDONALD.

P.O. Box 1298, Johannesburg, South Africa. 13th June, 1937.

## WINTER READING

THE TAVERNS IN THE TOWN. By H. E. POPHAM. Illustrated.  
Hale. 10s. 6d.

HOW THWARTING IT is to be in an unfamiliar neighbourhood and not to know which are the most interesting pubs (taverns to you, if you must)! No longer need that happen. The author of this book has had the generosity to make each chapter a tour, so that after reading it, we find there is not a district of London in which the pubs are not put on the map. For this, much thanks! Unlike A. E. Richardson in his *Old Inns of England*, the author confines himself to London. Even so, he has a vast field—and well covered. His history is generally good and he is sensible about names, having no truck with that fancy derivation which sees in the *Elephant and Castle* a reference to Eleanor of Castille. At the same time, like most experts, he seems to me wrong on *The Green Man*, who is surely our folk-friend, Jack I' the Green? I'd have liked help on the *Green Coat Boy*, by Victoria, and still want to know what are *Blue Posts*. But there is a good deal more than names in this work. There's a good deal of heartiness (he assumes that everyone who reads it will be a cricket-fan), and a good deal of Dickens. Not enough, to my way of thinking, of beer or that pub-created character, the barmaid. That's a grave flaw—but one we can rectify ourselves, the more readily with this guide to hand.

G. R. N. LIST

ROOM AND WINDOW GARDENING. By WALTER P. WRIGHT.  
Illustrated. Dent. 5s.

HEADED *The Flat Beautiful*, which should warn one what to expect, the first part of this book nevertheless startles with such observations as "The wearing of buttonhole flowers does not necessarily imply gardening. It is, however, a pleasant habit and therefore one to be encouraged". We are "regaled", as he would say, with riddles—"Can all flower-lovers turn to hanging baskets for the inner sides of windows with the same confidence as they utilize window-boxes for the exterior?" Can they? The answer is so immediately "NO" that we wonder why the question was asked. Application of many of the author's suggestions would result in the flat beautiful seeming to resemble the apartments (antiquated) of our seaside childhood. But later there comes a month to month gardening calendar which alone is well worth the price. Further, scattered through the pages is almost all the information that can be required for gardening-without-a-garden. It is only a pity that it has to be reached through the embarrassing archness of a sort of church-magazine writing.

A. WILLS

COMPOSITION FOR PHOTOGRAPHERS. By CHARLES SIMPSON.  
Witherby. 10s. 6d.

A SCULPTOR CANNOT give significance to a modernistic head shaped like a hen-coop until he first knows how to model a head like flesh and bone. So amateur photographers cannot profit by breaking the rules of composition until they know the rules. For them Mr. Simpson's book will be invaluable. Afterwards they might look at a book by Professor Moholy-Nagy devoted to photographs which are striking successes just because they break some first principle of composition.

Photography is like black magic—of everything that it is possible to say the reverse equally holds true! but the amateurs are very lucky to have a painter of Mr. Simpson's sensitivity writing for them.

OSWELL BLAKESTON

ART AND UNDERSTANDING. By MARGARET BULLEY. Batsford.  
15s.

FOR THE FIRST few pages of this book you may imagine that your difficulty in understanding it is due to the unusual vocabulary and the strange use of familiar words. You hope perhaps that with a little experience of this different language you will be able to turn back and translate it fluently into your own. When you have bravely pursued your necessary training, make just one more try to discover the coherences. At times the technique is one of poetry, and remarkably bad poetry.

"When the loveliness of spring is upon the earth the heart dances to the heavenly tune. Tiny leaves make a wreath about the solid boughs. The shrill cries of small birds cut the delicate air. Warmth rises from the earth. Grace abounds. The heavenly air, distant yet near at hand, traces through the visible frame the invisible theme."

Elsewhere it will remind you of one of those religious tracts privately printed and circulated, written by someone who has seen the light and cannot express it to others. But in the middle of it all the theme of the book begins to reveal itself. To aid the lazy it is summarized before the illustrations. Here it is explained that the "IDEA" (which underlies her art theory) refers to the idea of harmony, spiritual in essence, coming to man in the form of a mind-picture, but received by man, as artist, as the mind-picture of a thing. There are also counterfeits of this true Idea, which are found in a material sense of things. This thesis is not particularly new, it is in many respects obviously false, and here is elaborated with the maximum of obscurity. At the end the purpose is clarified, and is seen to be a general defence of middleclass middlebrow standards of criticism.

JOHN MADGE

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